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**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION  
IN PLANNING**



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# CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

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## Introduction

"The planner's current *nostrum* is 'citizen participation'...but... within a very short time...it will be shown to be what in truth it is: a mere palliative for the ills of the planning profession."<sup>(1)</sup> Undoubtedly, the subject has captured the imagination of both planners and the public—or, at least, some of each of them—and the implementation of a diversity of participation strategies has been recorded and added to the growing volume of literature in planning. However, most of the available experience, and much of the readily accessible literature is repetitive, and represents little more than variations on a few well-worn themes. The reasons for this not wholly satisfactory position are not difficult to find; the methodological basis for planning has yet to be fully exposed, and it certainly remains short of a consensus; the behavioural dimensions of planning, and particularly the political dimensions, receive scant treatment in planning schools, and are merely 'experienced' rather than recorded for the benefit of others by practitioners; the planning systems and their processes have tended to become conceptually fossilised, too conservative and bound by precedent or convenience to be innovative or amenable to change. There are other reasons, but these three should be sufficient to provoke a re-appraisal of the planner's attitude towards change in the decision-making process.

In recent years, the planning process has assumed a more scientific status; the introduction of concepts and methodologies from disciplines previously peripherally associated with planning, and from others which have shaken the conservative foundations by their diversity and peculiarities, has tended to render the theory and prac-

<sup>(1)</sup> Broady (1969), p. 216.

## 2 *Citizen Participation in Planning*

tice of planning more relevant to the challenges of society in the latter half of the twentieth century. Whilst some conceptual and practical dimensions of planning have advanced, others, noticeably those concerned with politics, have lost ground. With the statutory or moral obligations to extend democratically the base of decision-making in planning, there has emerged an information vacuum on the subject of citizen participation. It is hoped that this book will contribute to the closing of the gap between theory and practice by drawing together a diversity of threads from political science, philosophy and psychology, community theory and regional science, rendering them comprehensible in the context of planning. This synthesis is attempted progressively. However, before a synopsis is given of the scope of this book, it would be appropriate to briefly consider the nature of participatory or collaborative planning, and its relationship to the power 'game'.

### COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

"There seems to be a consensus . . . that we will not approach success in the solution of our urban crises without the expansion and further development of new forms in citizen participation."<sup>(2)</sup> It is this sentiment which has promoted a prolonged and continuing investigation into the special area of politics and citizen participation. The problem to which such investigation is addressed is not new; it has exercised politicians, and the students and theorists in political science for centuries, but it has only seriously entered the decision field of urban and regional planning comparatively recently. As society has developed, and has become culturally and technologically sophisticated, there has grown an insistence that decision-making should become compatibly refined and expert; but, in recent decades there has emerged a paralled insistence, that decision-making should be infused with a more democratic expression. Thus, within the last decade or two modern society has tended to advocate the simultaneous growth of participatory democracy and expertise in decision-making. Clearly, it is not possible to maximise both of these value preferences; it is not that they are necessarily exclusive and incompat-

<sup>(2)</sup> Mann (1970), p. 182.

ible one with the other, but that they are capable of neutralising each other with the result that the decisions made are less than satisfactory to the demands of the participants and the technical requirements of the problem to be solved. Despite these antagonisms, the tensions in society dictate that meaningful attempts should be made to reshape the traditional decision-making processes to accommodate strategies of citizen participation; the movement of such advocacy has gained a momentum which is now irresistible, and it has attracted a high emotional content so that any denial of opportunities for citizen involvement is challenged as a betrayal of the democratic tradition.

In spite of the often reluctant indulgence in exercises of citizen participation, there is a growth of case histories which is available for examination, and from which lessons may be learned. From this volume of case studies it becomes apparent that possibly nothing in urban and regional planning has previously been the subject of such contention, confusion and conflict. The almost incessant criticism of the decision-making process, the opportunities for citizen involvement and the means proposed to achieve participation, is frequently accompanied by expressed suspicion of the motives for the programmes; the antipathy towards the agencies participating in the extended decision-making programmes is endured by both the government planning departments at all levels, by advocacy-consultants, and by some private paternalistic (and occasionally philanthropic) community design agencies.<sup>(3)</sup> Burke (1968) has suggested that this unfortunate situation has possibly arisen because of the inability of society to wed its idealised notions of citizen participation to the demands of public policy-making and implementation. To cope with the intellectual problem he has suggested that citizen participation could be interpreted as an instrument to achieve specific ends, or, because of the diversity of ends sought in planning, as a series of strategies each defined in terms of stated objectives. The failure to properly identify the purposes of the chosen participation strategy, and the ends it is hoped to attain, results in a gap between what

<sup>(3)</sup> There is evidence of the exclusion of advocacy planners from 'in-camera' community meetings, with these planners being associated conceptually with those of the public planning agency as "them". (See footnote 85, p. 240.)

#### 4 Citizen Participation in Planning

the planning agency and the citizens purport to do and what they actually can do. It is necessary, therefore, for planning agencies and the general citizenry to achieve a consensual precision on the interpretation of 'citizen participation', how the concept may be operationalised, what resources will be required, what the various decision-making responsibilities will entail and where they may be properly located. "This may mean a redefinition... a new focus where a citizen group assumes the responsibility for defining the goals and the aims of the planning agency."<sup>(4)</sup>

Citizen participation may be best conceived, not as an alternative to the conventional decision-making process pursued by the public planning agencies in the institutionalised framework of modern government, but as a *decision-forming partnership*, an exercise in collaboration. This is the interpretation given to participation by Godschalk (1966). *Collaborative planning* has been simply described as a process in which there is a genuine interchange between citizens and planners. "Participation is a two-edged sword; planners must be open to working with citizens, and citizens must be active and competent in planning."<sup>(5)</sup> In his development of the concept of collaborative planning Godschalk (1971) has tentatively set twelve propositions; in summary these are:

1. the broader the base of citizen participation in the planning process, the more potential influence the planner and citizens can bring to bear on public policies and plans;
  2. the broader the base of citizen participation, the more potential influence the planner can bring to bear on the social choices of the citizens, and vice versa;
  3. the more diverse the interests represented in the planning process, the more innovative will be the proposals;
- } planning strategy

<sup>(4)</sup> Burke (1968), p. 294.

<sup>(5)</sup> Godschalk (1972), p. 31.



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|--|--|
| 4. the more decentralised the client groups, the more innovations will be adopted;   | } planning strategy <sup>(6)</sup>         |
| 5. the more centralised and comprehensive the decision process, the fewer will be the innovations;   |  |
| 6. local planning goals will be more congruent with community desires if discussed widely by participant groups and then communicated to the decision-making body;     | } planning method                          |
| 7. a one-way flow of objectives from a central decision-making body to a planning agency will tend to under-represent the interests of some community groups;          |  |
| 8. the more public consultation techniques are used, the more the planning programme will attract public support;  |  |
| 9. the more the planning process facilitates citizen participation, the more the community will be aware of the planning function as a democratic and community force; | } planning programme content               |
| 10. participatory planning, open to radical proposals, is more likely to pursue innovative solutions to community problems;  |  |
| 11. the wider the scope of planning and the longer the time horizon, the less useful (and possible) collaborative planning will be;                                    |  |
| 12. the relevance of the planning function, and its influence will depend upon the number of dispersed contacts established in the community.                          | } location of the planning decision system |

These twelve propositions provide a basis from which to explore the ramifications of citizen participation, both as a concept, and as a decision-making technique. The need, in planning, to become aware of the significance of citizen participation has been expressed by Bolan (1967): "No matter how we improve our substantive knowledge of

<sup>(6)</sup> The classification of planning system components—planning strategy, method, programme-content and position—is derived from Bolan (1967).

## 6 *Citizen Participation in Planning*

how cities function, and no matter how we improve our capabilities in information handling, operations research, and prediction, if there is not a corollary development of the community's capacity for improved decision-making within the framework of democratic processes, there is the real possibility that heavy investment in the current forms of city planning technique will have been in vain."<sup>(7)</sup>

Despite the serious implications of Bolan's warning, there is a patent tendency for citizen participation to be treated as a fad. Some cities and planning agencies are inclined to embark upon the adoption of every new concept and technique almost as soon as it is revealed; it is as true of citizen participation, as it has been of corporate planning, systems planning, and as it was with the 'Buchananisation' of urban road plans in Britain during the mid-1960's. In contrast, but exceptionally, other agencies conduct thorough investigations into the rationale and practicability of participation, drawing upon the experience of the increasing volume of methodological and case studies.<sup>(8)</sup> This is precisely the context in which this book is set.

### PARTICIPATION AND POWER

There is a tendency for the more theoretical studies of citizen participation to refer to the practice as an attempt to achieve a redistribution of power, on the basis that a reduction in the differences in power between levels in society, or in organisations or in groups should be conducive to a more realistic implementation of the democratic credo. In this vein participation has become one of the most vital organisational problems in decision-making, i.e. how participation can be made a reality. In the development of structures to achieve a meaningful state of participation there is a danger that the exercise will become the focus of a power struggle, between those emphasising the need for more participation from the public, and those who emphasise the desirability of reserving decision-making functions and responsibilities to an élite, no matter how that élite is derived or composed. The debate between these two viewpoints has tended not to explore the goals of decision-making, nor the

<sup>(7)</sup> Bolan (1967), p. 244.

<sup>(8)</sup> For example, NIPC (1973), Tacoma (1971).

means of participation which might be efficient; rather has it crystallised the viewpoints, rendering them almost irreconcilable, and contrary to the spirit of participatory democracy (Mulder, 1971). One of the most distressing elements in the debate, particularly from the viewpoint of the participants, and the students of the subject, is the lack of consensus on the definition of 'participation'; but, in this definitional vacuum, it is joined by the concept of 'power' (Partridge, 1970). This definitional problem is encountered throughout Part 1 of this book in the considerations of democracy, representation and the public interest. It is probably this lack of consensus that is the fundamental cause of the unsatisfactory state of participation theory, and contributory to the generally less than satisfactory state of the practice.<sup>(9)</sup>

Strauss (1963) has argued that, no matter how it is defined, participation is in effect a means of reducing power differences, and is therefore contributory to power equalisation; this becomes manifest in the operationalisation of participation in which communication among equals is frequently explicitly mentioned. However, empirical evidence of the democratisation programmes in industrial organisations, such as with the workers councils, is testimony to the proposition that participation effectively reduces inequalities of power "is too rough to be true."<sup>(10)</sup> The analysis of the differential experience, competence, and access to relevant information of the council members renders the notion of power equalisation invalid and impossible; in some respects, the maintenance of these differentials is a precondition of the social order.

One of the principal prerequisites for participation is that the expected participants should be motivated to act. Empirical evidence strongly suggests that such motivation is commonly negligible. It has been suggested that participation is promoted primarily by members of the intellectual, often academic levels of society: "The

<sup>(9)</sup> This dilemma is partially generated by the lack of sympathy in the interpretations of political science and social science, differences which may be due to the conceptual and methodological bases of these disciplines. It is necessary for the student of participation to be aware of these differences before any attempt is made to construct a personal philosophy of participation preparatory to the development of means of implementing the resulting concept (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962).

<sup>(10)</sup> Mulder (1971), p. 32.

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intellectuals are making up the game, and the rules for the game."<sup>(11)</sup> The 'game' has participants other than the intellectuals, and it may be argued that the euphoria for participatory democracy is another manifestation of particular societal values and aspirations being exposed as generally desirable, whereas there is no clear indication of a real groundswell of aspiration for participation in decision-making.<sup>(12)</sup> This promotion of participation by the intellectuals may be another power game, in which middle-class values are imposed on the community. The 'green ban' movement in Australia is representative of working-class intellectualism, manifesting many of the traits of unrepresentativeness, yet morally and intellectually defensible (Camina, 1975).

The extent to which the opportunities for participation are seized is largely preconditioned by the processes of socialisation. Differences between the apathetic and the activist citizens are acquired and not genetically inherited characteristics. As each person grows from childhood, he becomes politically socialised, with the result that some attitudes, skills and behaviours are learned whilst others are rejected, ignored or never experienced; eventually, by maturity, certain political behaviour options are open, and others foreclosed, and the initially vast number of possible political behaviour responses is severely reduced. The socialisation process occurs in the environmental context of each person's existence, and his response to situations will influence his learning process and his future action in similar situations. Participation-related socialisation is incredibly complex; it is more extensive than motivation or competence, and it certainly is inclusive of a person's personality development (Weissberg, 1974; Milbrath, 1965).

This very important facet of participation is given further consideration in Chapter 4.

<sup>(11)</sup> Mulder (1971), p. 35.

<sup>(12)</sup> It has been reported that Yugoslav labourers never asked for workers' self-government, but nevertheless received it through the work councils as a gift from ideologically motivated academics (Sturanovic, cited in Mulder (1971), p. 35).

## THE CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF THE BOOK

"Citizen participation... spells politics in planning and usually radical politics at that",<sup>(13)</sup> and "planning cannot escape the dilemma... and the fact that planning decisions are inevitably political choices."<sup>(14)</sup>

This is the context of the considerations in the following chapters. The subject of citizen participation has already attracted considerable literature, and this fact places some obligation on any author of a further work to offer some justification for adding to the growing volume. I have restricted personal references in this book to this section and the next, so at this point, I offer five reasons for this book, each of which is related to a particular problem in the subject. The first justification is that the pursuit of citizen participation in urban and regional planning is too frequently undertaken in considerable ignorance of the political philosophy of democracy. From the study of the growing volume of case studies it is apparent that most planning agencies indulge in practices of participation as though they were simply additional planning techniques to be woven into the planning process; little thought, if any, is apparently given to the not inconsiderable complexities of democracy, its theory and its practice, or to the sensitive issues of representation and the public interest. Many of the traumas generated within participation practices may be traced to the naive conceptions of democracy. The naivety is most patent on the part of the planners and their political masters, and it is rather obvious in many of the discussion papers prepared by planners for planners. A different form of naivety is manifest in the writings of the political scientists in their commentaries on citizen participation in urban and regional planning; their most grievous sin is the ignorance they display of the subtleties of planning practice, of the statutory framework of planning, and of the distinct differences between planning and other areas of socio-economic endeavour, and between one national planning system and another. The considerations of Part 1 are designed to cope with many of these matters.

<sup>(13)</sup> Loveday (1972), p. 130.

<sup>(14)</sup> Parker (1972), pp. 34-5.

The second justification is that there would appear to be an insufficient appreciation that planning is an organised activity, and that any analytical or deliberative technique which it is proposed to use needs to be accurately placed in the sequence of events. To promote some understanding of this, attention is given in Part 2 to the operational processes appropriate to decision-making in planning. An awareness of the organisational ramifications of planning should be incumbent upon each aspiring and potential participant.

By far the major proportion of Part 2 is devoted to a synoptic, and then a detailed treatment of the participants to the planning process. It seems inconceivable that any planning agency will embark upon, or that any interest group will agitate for, opportunities for citizen participation in advance of a thorough appraisal of (a) the full complement of potential participants, and (b) the likely competence of each participant or participant group to efficiently discharge the responsibilities allocated to, or assumed by him or them. Yet, not infrequently, members of the public are asked questions they are unable to answer, professionals are invited to undertake activities which are not in sympathy with their codes of professional conduct, planners or planning agencies either seek to pursue courses of action which have no statutory basis or fail to discharge statutory obligations, and the minister is required to comment upon matters which are outside his sphere, or he is omitted in the sequence of consultations. The examples of improper or inappropriate action consequent upon a less than adequate knowledge of the complement of participants appropriate to a particular planning situation, and awareness of their respective competences seem to justify the expenditure of considerable space on these matters; this constitutes the third justification.

There is a perceptible tendency for practices of participation to be drawn from a narrow range of alternatives; therefore, the fourth justification for this book is that there is a patent need for the spectrum of usable and useful techniques of involving the public, and of rendering an impact on the decision-making processes, to be significantly extended. Thus, the major chapter in Part 3 is devoted to an examination of means of participation. The fifth and final justification is the need for the participants in, and the promoters of

citizen participation strategies to be aware that the increased democratisation of the planning process is a mixed blessing. As has been argued briefly in a previous section of this Introduction, participation is a means towards power equalisation; it is also a means of re-interpreting the democratic ethic. However, for these and other benefits, some penalties are exacted in the form of impediments. The decision-making process is not unequivocally improved because of lay intervention, and it is necessary for the community and the conventional decision-making fraternity to be aware of the impediments to meaningful participation; not one of those discussed in Part 4 has an ideological foundation.

It is on the basis that these five problem areas deserve treatment, and that possibly the treatment should be undertaken within the confines of one book, that this volume in the urban and regional planning series has been approached. I am under no delusion that the treatment has successfully addressed each of the problems; in fact, in developing some arguments, and in describing some facets of the subject, others previously thought to be of minor significance have assumed greater importance. This has led to a change in the balance of the book, with an extended treatment being given to the participants and to the means of participation, at the expense of particular case studies. My aim throughout has been to draw together the threads of political and social science, and of sub-specialisms within those broad areas of study, and to interpret them in the context of urban and regional planning. In pursuing this course of action the book has inevitably become 'heavy on theory', but the defence of this is that it is precisely the inadequate comprehension or awareness of the underlying theory which has contributed to the less than desirable and expected performance of the citizenry in procedures allegedly designed to afford them access to the forum of decision-making. Therefore, no apologies are thought to be necessary for the bias in this book. It is probably necessary at this point to state my personal position on citizen participation. Ideologically, I am bound to cast my vote for as great a degree of lay involvement as the decision-making system can sustain. However, like most planners, I am a pragmatist, and jealous of my special competence; therefore, I am inclined to the view expressed in the Skeffington Report

that there is a point beyond which lay involvement cannot proceed, if only because a moment is reached at which the consultation and deliberation must stop and a decision made.

The book has been organised in four parts:

In Part 1, subtitled 'The Political Philosophy of Democracy and Participation', consideration is given to the broad concept of democracy and the variable interpretations to which the concept has been subjected. Attention is given to the participationist, élitist, and marxist viewpoints, with an examination of the classical democratic thesis through to the modern liberal revisions which have accommodated the present movement for increased opportunities for citizens to participate in decision-making. The second chapter is committed to an examination of two key concepts, 'representation', and 'the public interest'.

Part 2, subtitled 'The Environment of Decision-making' is concerned with an examination of the structures of decision-making, and the participants to the planning process. The processes and frameworks of planning are considered in order to identify the locations for citizen participation in a variety of theoretically formulated planning processes and in a number of operational decision processes. Consideration is given to a range of process statements extending from the simple triad formulation of Geddes to the steps listed in the DOE management network for structure plans. Against this formalised background the two frameworks of participation of Arnstein and Milbrath are reviewed. This concentration on the participant rather than the process provides the pivot for the considerations of Chapters 4 and 5. In the first of these chapters an overview is presented of the participants in the plan-making process, with a digression to consider the concept of power, and the importance of the media in citizen participation. Then, the five principal participant groups defined in Chapter 4 are exposed for detailed examination in Chapter 5, with attention being given to the composition of each participant group, their characteristics, motives and competence.

In Part 3, 'The Means of Participation' consideration is given to a review of various techniques which may be employed to accommodate a measure of citizen involvement. In order to achieve some



semblance of order, the various means (twenty-three are considered) are classified as being conventional, innovative, self-help, and dependent upon advanced communication technology. The review should not be considered exhaustive. So that a more balanced perspective may be placed on the interpretation of citizen participation in planning, Chapter 6 is concerned with an examination of the experience in Britain in the pre- and post-Skeffington periods; from this examination it will become apparent that the provision of opportunities for citizen involvement is not necessarily to be considered a product of agitation in the 1960's.

Finally, in Part 4, attention is turned to a sober investigation of the feasibility of citizen participation. In this investigation two types of impediment are identified, that which might frustrate participation because of inherent characteristics (the planning system, the participants, the techniques of participation, the subject matter of planning), and that which might impede participation because of the exceptional organisational demands which are generated by the commitment to such practices. A concluding chapter is devoted to a brief assessment of the citizen participation phenomenon.

It is perhaps necessary to remark that no deliberate attempt has been made to define some of the terms used freely throughout the text. For example, there is no definition given to such terms and expressions as 'citizen', 'participation', 'involvement', 'meaningful'. Undoubtedly, there is a need for suitable precision to be given to these and other expressions used in most discussions on citizen participation; however, this definitional exercise has not been undertaken in this book.

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It has been my intention that this book would be an introduction to the subject of citizen participation in urban and regional planning, a point of departure for further and perhaps more detailed study. In order to realise this intention I have made liberal use of a diversity of sources of inspiration and information. In composing these brief acknowledgements I am well aware of the attendant hazards, of the unconscious, certainly unintentional, but nevertheless almost inevitable omissions of reference to good friends and sources of inspiration without which the book might have taken a much different form. At this point, therefore, I hasten to point out that the omission of any name should not be construed to be the result of a careful exercise of judgement on my part.

The indebtedness I have to the scholarship of others will be readily apparent from an examination of the references throughout the book; even so, those by no means exhaust the sources of inspiration and information, a point which will not escape the critical eye of specialists in this field, who will experience little difficulty in detecting throughout the text those matters which are original and those which are derived from cited sources.

Throughout the period of writing, which has spanned almost two years, I have been stimulated by four scholars of whom I consider it necessary to make special mention. Without doubt, the most important source of inspiration has been Dilys Hill. I have been repeatedly encouraged by reading her published work in this subject, and I have benefited from brief conversations with her which have done much to give shape and stimulus to my rambling thoughts. Of considerable influence on the approach I have adopted in this book have been the recent publications of Andreas Faludi, David Eversley

and David Godschalk, particularly because they have collectively sustained my interest in the philosophical and methodological dimensions of planning (Faludi), have challenged my awareness of the prevailing inadequacies of planning competence (Eversley) and have provoked me to explore innovative means of participation (Godschalk). For a quite different form of encouragement I am grateful to many of my colleagues at the University of Queensland; of these, special mention is deserved by the Research Assistant, Sue Webster, for without her help many of the important inspirational references might have escaped by attention. My gratitude is extended to Mrs Maddock, particularly for her great capacity for decyphering my script, and no less for her commitment to the improvement of my grammar and spelling. In the preparation of this manuscript I have profited considerably from the amiable and constructive comments offered by David Godschalk, Dilys Hill, Lewis Keeble, and Pat Mullins. As is the sensible custom, the responsibility for the interpretation I have given to the various contributions is mine.

I wish to record my gratitude to Mrs Peggy Ducker of Pergamon Press and to Dereck Diamond, both of whom have been patient in their treatment of an author anxious to reshape a previously agreed format for this book; and finally mention is deserved by my family, Estelle, Simon and Matthew, for their encouragement, forbearance, and insistence that from time to time I leave the manuscript and 'join the land of the living'.

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## PART ONE

# *The Political Philosophy of Democracy and Participation*

The term 'participation' has become fashionable in the continuing debate on the quality of modern society. This wide-ranging debate, and particularly its frequent concentration on the systems of decision-making in the many areas of activity that have a bearing on the community's social welfare, is perhaps indicative of the increasing realisation that significant sections in the community have been denied an effective role in decision-making. There has arisen, therefore, an alarming gulf between the governors and many of the governed; and yet, recent experience in most countries boasting a formal and comprehensive planning system has shown that those community interests that want to expose their viewpoints to a wider audience have managed to interrupt the process of decision-making sufficiently to at least partially achieve that objective.

Much of the debate on the philosophical validity, and the practical efficacy of citizen participation has been naive. There is often a patent lack of awareness of the far-reaching philosophical and political dimensions of the concept of participation and its operational translation. There is a dilemma here. The growing volume of case study and superficial theoretical probe material to be found in planning literature has been written largely by and for planners, and it betrays an ignorance of important psycho-social, political and ideological dimensions of the subject. Similarly, the more philosophically and politically profound studies reported in social and political science journals, written by and largely for colleague social scientists, are ignorant of many of the complexities of the mechanistic planning process. What is seldom explained, is the measurability of improve-

ment to the ultimate decision that results from programmes of citizen participation. Neither is there communication of evidence to support contentions that the public wishes to meaningfully participate. Certainly, the clamouring of particular interest groups with axes to grind, or with reasonable grievances in need of redress, is subjected to some publicity; but there is a body of case studies and hypotheses to contradict the notion that all members of the public have an appetite for involvement in the processes of social welfare decision-making.<sup>(1)</sup> In part, the present euphoric pursuit of mechanisms for meaningful citizen involvement is the legacy of a decade or more of experimentation in many areas of the wide-ranging social welfare programmes in the United States. For particular cultural reasons, and because of the inferior stature of local government in the United States (as compared with, say, the United Kingdom), grass roots activity in decision-making has been a natural phenomenon. It would be dangerous to presume that the importation of the pro-participant philosophy and its associated practices of overt citizen participation to other national cultures without careful and suitable cultural translation would successfully democratise the decision-making process. This is as true of the arena of urban and regional planning as it is of most others in the broad scope of social welfare. It is necessary to be aware, too, that the great American experiment has not escaped criticism (Mogulof, 1970; Kaplan, 1973), and that the time elapse between experiment and importation to a distinctly different national or operational context may have concealed the discreditation of the tantalising 'new' concept or technique.<sup>(2)</sup>

The arguments about the health of democracy are not new; but there appears a fatalism in the present debate, which has diverted attention from necessary reform, particularly at the local level of government, to perhaps less necessary reorganisation of decision-making responsibilities and levels. Recently, a scholar has concluded that evidence suggests the public is becoming more 'consumerist' in its approach, demanding goods and services, and judging the instruments of government according to their ability to meet such demands, rather than clamouring for a more participatory society;

<sup>(1)</sup> Hill (1970), pp. 13-15.

<sup>(2)</sup> Eversley (1973), p. 125.

"Participation—actual involvement in the design and delivery of policies—should not be confused with demands for more consultation or better redress of grievances."<sup>(3)</sup>

In order to better interpret the potential for meaningful citizen participation in the process of decision-making in urban and regional planning, Part 1 of this book is concerned with an examination of some of the theories of democracy and particularly those, or parts of those which specifically consider the matter of public involvement. This examination is conducted through two chapters: the first considers broadly the compass of democratic theory from the relatively simplistic notions of classical Athenian culture to the more complex restatements, reinterpretations or revisions of political scientists and philosophers from the seventeenth century to the present day. Attention is given about equally to both the participationist and the elitist viewpoints. Chapter 2 is concerned with the isolation for examination of two key concepts, viz. 'representation' and 'the public interest'. This part of the book is inescapably heavy on theory.

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<sup>(3)</sup> Hill (1974), p. 44.

## CHAPTER 1

### Theories of Democracy and Participation

The study of democracy and participation is fraught with often unexpected difficulties; in particular, the term and concept of 'participation' has attracted to itself in recent years a diversity of meanings and a seemingly inexhaustible variety of practical expressions. In addition, 'participation' has become at various times the focus of sympathy, antipathy, comprehension, incomprehension, delay, frustration, challenge, and other similar emotional responses; it seldom seems capable of attracting rational consideration and expression. The diversity of context in which participation practices have been used, or attempted, is almost without limit; and, just as the context has varied, so has the purpose of its use by politicians, community radicals, public servants, activist organisations, industrialists, trade unionists, and even individual citizens. Most practical expressions have passionately partisan dimensions, which may arise spontaneously and somewhat unexpectedly, or which may have been deliberately incorporated in the design of the programme of participation. To further confuse the study of participation within the broader context of democracy, careful appreciation needs to be made of the overt contradictions, inconclusiveness from the experiments, particularity and the constraints of time, place and circumstance.

In order to achieve a meaningful philosophical base from which to appraise the need for and the appropriate expression of citizen participation in decision-making, a review follows of some of the theories of democracy and participation.



THEORIES OF PARTICIPATION

Democracy and participation fit the common mould of the social and political sciences with their litter of discrepancies between theory and practice, and the contrasts between aspiration and implementation. Such discrepancies and contrasts seem to pervade most institutionalised expressions of democracy, whether of the liberal variety of the 'free world' or of the socialist expression of communist republics, or of the strange hybrids characteristic of the developing nations in the 'third world'. As might be expected, a variety of opinion is expressed to explain the differences, and the operational shortfalls. For example, some commentators assert that low levels of popular participation in political decision-making are *de facto* expressions of a preference for non-involvement, and that this conscious demonstration should be respected and should not be the subject of canvass or coercion; others suggest that modern institutional structures actually frustrate attempts by citizens to become involved in the decision process; the extreme viewpoint of the élitists is that participation by the 'masses' would be debilitating to political systems. Almost at the midpoint between these views is the advocacy of controlled opportunities for citizen participation in plan-making activities.

The reason or reasons for the pervasive confusion and contradictions may include the range of fundamentally different ideologies and philosophies, and the cumbersome institutionalised decision-making frameworks; but, perhaps of equal pertinence is the view that participatory democracy is an idyllic behaviour pattern, a people-government relationship more appropriate to a bygone era of human and cultural development than to the generally complex scope and scale of society in the twentieth century, with which it is both inconsistent and possibly incompatible.

*Classical Democracy*

It has been observed that in recent years democracy has assumed ambiguous identities. This contention is to some extent supported by the proliferation of epigrammatic definitions: for example—'government of the people, by the people, and for the people...'<sup>(1)</sup>;

<sup>(1)</sup> Lincoln; speech made on 19th November 1863.

'government by consent'; 'majority rule'; 'sovereignty of the people'; 'representative government'; 'government in the public interest'; and many, many others. It is possible that some of the political and social disturbances that occasionally erupt in various parts of the world, as sections of the population clamour for more opportunities to participate in the making of decisions that will affect their welfare, are the manifestation of the release of frustrations caused by the inadequate implementation of rights, privileges and powers assumed by many to be implicit in the philosophy of democracy and the operational structures associated with it. In another direction, the lack of precision in the term facilitates both unconscious and willful manipulation of its spirit and purpose, for legitimate or less scrupulous reasons. The lack of consensus affords the opportunity for indulgence in the charismatic appeal of the term and its expressions. At least one attempt to develop a model of democracy (Ranney and Kendall, 1956) has pointed to the widespread popular association of democratic government with good government, and to the not infrequent emotional translation of the philosophy into a moral framework.<sup>(2)</sup> The model, in spite of the attempt to derive an objective and emotion-free framework, resorts to a classification based on four principles whose descriptions are themselves charismatic and susceptible to misinterpretation: popular sovereignty, political equality, popular consultation, majority rule. Other attempts to unravel the mysticism of democracy have included Sartori's (1962) definition by exclusion, and Lipson's (1964) hypothesis that democracy might not be an entity in itself but a medley of contradictions.<sup>(3)</sup>

*The Athenian experiment.* The experience of Athens is probably the most frequently used benchmark for considerations of the fundamental tenets and ideas of democracy (Barker, 1960; Jones, 1964),

<sup>(2)</sup> "Words like 'democracy', 'liberty', 'duty' have a powerful emotive function; they are frequently used as battle cries, as appeals to emotions, and as substitutes for thought. Many of the disputes . . . which undoubtedly arise from a conflict of emotional attitudes, would assuredly disappear if the precisely defined equivalents were substituted for these words." Cohen and Nagel (1934), *Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, Harcourt, Brace, New York, p. 232.

<sup>(3)</sup> It is necessary to have followed the development of Lipson's thesis to fully appreciate the dilemma he exposes. A summary of his argument appears in Lipson (1964), pp. 565-8.

and it is to the period of the sixth to fourth centuries B.C. that most of the theorising and innovation is attributed. Other of the Greek city-states during this period contributed to the development of democratic theory and institutions, but because their history has been less well documented, or because they were comparatively small and culturally less significant, it is to Athens that attention is inevitably turned for the chronicle and manifestation of classical democracy.

The term 'democracy' was coined by the Greek historian Herodotus, in his association of *demos*, meaning 'the people', with *kratein*, meaning 'to rule'. Herodotus records the essential features of democracy as (a) equality before the law, (b) popular deliberation and the development of a popular consensus, and (c) public accountability of the officials;<sup>(4)</sup> to these was later added (d) equality of speech.<sup>(5)</sup> Herodotus carefully balanced his arguments pro and con particular matters; for example, after proposing the case for popular deliberation he issues the warning that "nothing is more stupid or more prone to excess than a useless crowd... the people rush in violently and force matters on without intelligence, like a river in full flood."<sup>(6)</sup> Although Herodotus is credited with the coining of the term and its early primitive explanation, the *locus classicus* is the funeral oration of Pericles, recorded in the chronicles of Thucydides; in spite of the context of patriotism and emotion in which the oration was delivered, necessitating careful interpretation, it remains the fundamental and definitive statement on the philosophy and practice of democracy consistent with the 'classical period'.<sup>(7)</sup>

This Athenian experiment is sometimes referred to as 'direct democracy'. Its central principle was the equal right of every citizen to participate in the processes of government, i.e. in one of the three main organs of government—the assembly of citizens, the council, and the courts. The operationalisation of the equality principle did not create a single mammoth decision-making forum of several thou-

<sup>(4)</sup> *History*, Book III, p. 80.

<sup>(5)</sup> *History*, Book V, p. 78.

<sup>(6)</sup> *History*, Book III, p. 81.

<sup>(7)</sup> The full oration appears in Thucydides, *History*, Book II, pp. 35–46. It is appended in Rikker (1965), *Democracy in the United States*, MacMillan, New York, pp. 345–350; and it is translated in full in Zimmern (1931), *The Greek Commonwealth*, pp. 200–9.

sand people; then, as now, it was realised that full participation in every aspect of decision-making was physically and managerially impossible, and that it was better for the available energies and expertise to be distributed appropriately between the various organs of government. The *assembly*, whose function it was to discuss all questions of policy, was open to all male citizens over the age of thirty years. Records of attendance vary between 3000 and 6000 persons, but it appears the sessions were dominated by middle class representation and by orations from aspiring politicians. The purpose of the *assembly* was to provide opportunities for views to be aired, representing the collective wisdom of the citizenry. Its agenda was determined by the *council*, which functioned as a steering committee, the membership of which was composed of five hundred citizens elected annually from a panel by lot in proportion to the size of each demos. The workload was conducted by a rotating roster of fifty members; it is this body that had significantly more power than any other. The *juries*, the third body, was composed of six thousand citizens chosen annually by lot, and operated as popular law courts, as guardians of the constitution, the civil and the criminal codes. Thus, Athenian democracy was accommodating to all shades of opinion and interest, for there was neither an identifiable corporate government nor an opposition. There was a *de facto* situation of political equality, with each citizen invested with identical rights, privileges and obligations to carry out political duties and to hold public office. Two factors, evidenced in the classical Athenian situation rendered widespread participation in decision-making a possibility: firstly, the small numbers of the available citizenry, and secondly, the absence of formal political parties. Neither of these pre-requisites obtain in most modern political contexts.

'Direct' democracy has not been without its critics. Most Greek scholars and philosophers of the classical period—that is, with the notable exception of Pericles—have expressed doubts about both the philosophy and the practice of democracy. Socrates was particularly sceptical. Plato was demonstrably hostile, condemnatory and cynical towards the means used to bring about the state of democratic government and the consequences of it.<sup>(8)</sup> Aristotle considered

<sup>(8)</sup> *Republic*, Book VIII.

democracy to be a deviant political system.<sup>(9)</sup> In addition to these, and similar persuasive criticisms, it is of consequence to modern attempts to practise meaningful citizen participation in decision-making that the available record of classical democracy does not reveal an unequivocal egalitarian situation, and that the isolation and short duration of the cultural experiment possibly renders it inappropriate for adoption in the present complex societal context without suitable translation and manipulation.

It is to the reinterpretations and revisions that attention is now directed.

#### *Participant Political Culture*

From the period of the demise of classical Athenian culture, and for almost two millenia, interest in systems of government, particularly their ideological and philosophical bases, was dormant until the liberal awakening of the seventeenth century. Then, for almost two centuries, there was "a great outpouring of political ideas"<sup>(10)</sup>, and it is from such revelations of social awareness and commitment that twentieth century political and philosophical commentators have fashioned 'participant political culture'.

One of the earliest of the significant commentators in this period of revival was Thomas Hobbes, who disclosed a clear preference for a governmental system headed by a *sovereign*.<sup>(11)</sup> He exhibited political shrewdness by extending the scope of his philosophy from a single person as sovereign to a sovereign assembly. This is the hallmark of the Hobbesian philosophy: an insistence on a single (personal or corporate) decision-maker. Such a viewpoint encouraged him to be somewhat critical of 'classical democracy' suspecting that anything other than an omnipotent, indivisible and unified sovereign would fail to achieve what to him was the principal prerequisite of successful government, viz. the attainment and maintenance of social order. The preference of John Locke is less clear,<sup>(12)</sup> and the

<sup>(9)</sup> *Politics*, Book III.

<sup>(10)</sup> Birch (1971).

<sup>(11)</sup> Hobbes (1651), *Leviathan*.

<sup>(12)</sup> Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*.

ambiguity of his writing has led Dahl (1956) to adjudge him an advocate equally of unlimited majority rule *and* trusteeship. Locke's governmental system is composed of two inter-related constituents; firstly, he *expected* the public would agree to establish a society, and be willing to abide by majority decisions; secondly, he *assumed* the majority would establish an executive to discharge the necessary lawmaking and lawkeeping responsibilities. In respect of citizen participation, Locke may be assessed to be non-committal as he is as sympathetic to democratic as to monarchical or aristocratic governmental systems. Montesquieu adopted a position contrary to that of Hobbes. He was more inclined to favour a dispersion of the power base in society between an executive, a legislature and a judiciary.<sup>(13)</sup> Of similar persuasion was the Swiss, Helvetius, who expressed a preference for a system of government *representing* all sections and interests in heterogeneous society. This preferred system was based on the principle of political equilibrium—the representation and involvement of all societal groups to obviate the resort of some groups to social disturbance to redress and redesign the distribution of meaningful decision-making power. This laudable principle was not, according to Helvetius, to be of universal application; for example, his preference for widespread popular participation did not extend the franchise to the poor and to the uneducated or ignorant, for he considered such groups to be without interests or opinions worthy of promotion or defence.

The commentaries of these philosophers are significant benchmarks in the evolution of modern practices of, and of attitudes towards participatory democracy. However, the greatest weight of significance rests on the works of Rousseau, Madison, Calhoun, Mill, de Tocqueville, and more recently Cole.<sup>(14)</sup> It is to these sources particularly that twentieth-century commentators turn to re-interpret the significance of democracy and democratic institutions for contemporary society, essentially because such authors have expressed their

<sup>(13)</sup> Montesquieu (1748), *The Spirit of Laws*, Book X, chap. VI.

<sup>(14)</sup> Rousseau (1762), *The Social Contract*; Madison (1787), *The Federalist Papers*; Calhoun (1853), *Disquisition on Government*; Mill (1861), *Considerations on Representative Government*; de Tocqueville (1862), *Democracy in America*; Cole (1920), *Social Theory*.

concepts within societal contexts more similar to those prevailing now than did those writers of the seventeenth centuries, and earlier. Reviews, criticisms, commentaries and interpretations of the scholars of the late eighteenth century onwards abound in the literature of social and political science and philosophy.<sup>(15)</sup>

We turn attention now to more recent analytical work, concentrating on (a) the civic culture, and on (b) the democratic citizen.

*Civic culture.* "Civic culture is not a modern culture, but one that combined modernity with tradition."<sup>(16)</sup> This form of political system has been differentiated from others according to criteria of communication, persuasion, consensus, and diversity, all of which are dimensions of what has been described as 'the participation explosion' (Almond and Verba, 1965). Within a description of models of political culture, Almond and Verba have defined a *participant political culture* as "one in which the members of society tend to be explicitly oriented to the system as a whole and to both the political and administrative structures and processes . . . (and) tend to be oriented toward an 'activist' role of the self in the polity."<sup>(17)</sup> Two other particular popular cultures are identified in their work—'parochial' and 'subject' cultures—each exemplifying degrees of passive acquiescence to decision-making by an élite, in the form of one person or a power clique. Almond and Verba consider the participant political culture to be closest to the spirit and purpose of classical democracy as it has been refined through centuries of experimentation, because of the overt willingness of some sections of the community to accept whatever opportunities are offered by the formal caucus of decision-makers to promote and foster 'change' by peaceful and responsible action. Such levels of activity are considered by them to be the norm of citizenship. Events throughout the world, and in many areas of social welfare, have demonstrated that the availability of opportunities for participation by a wider section of the community has led to more and better articulated claims for the extension of power-shar-

<sup>(15)</sup> For detailed consideration of the political theses attention is directed to the original sources. However, useful discussions of the viewpoints of the authors listed in the paragraph may be found in Dahl (1956); Pateman (1970).

<sup>(16)</sup> Almond and Verba (1965), p. 5.

<sup>(17)</sup> Almond and Verba (1965), p. 18.

ing. Despite the appeal of Almond and Verba's reformulated and updated version of democracy, it is inescapable that it is based on a perpetuation of idyllic notions of the norms of citizenship. Much of the success or failure of planning policies is dependent upon an intelligent appreciation by élitist decision-makers of the most likely course of action to emerge from the interplay of the multifarious political behaviour and preference deviations in the citizenry; rational action, flowing from a careful consideration of motivations, contradictory interests and principles, the operational constraints of culture and institutional processes is seldom the hallmark of the behavioural norm of the democratic citizen—no matter how unfortunate and lamentable this situation is. Thus, the highest attainment of citizen participation in the civic culture is likely to be depressed beneath a 'meaningful minimum' because of the interplay of (a) the complexity of decision-making processes and (b) the general disregard for the responsibilities associated with citizenship. Almond and Verba, and others, are of the opinion that conscientious and charismatic leadership within a community may achieve an improved popular performance in decision-making, while James Bryce (1921) has argued that "an essential ingredient of a satisfactory democracy is that a considerable proportion should have experience of active participation in the work of small selfgoverning groups, whether in connection with local government, trade unions, co-operatives or other forms of activity."<sup>(18)</sup> Other political commentators of a more radical persuasion, require much greater degrees of intensity, both opportunity and means, of political activism to connote participation.<sup>(19)</sup> These views, however, are perhaps representative more of moderation and reason when interpreted on the spectrum extending from the idyllic notions of the 'classical' form to the arrogant denials of participation of the élitist forms of democracy.

As will be seen later (pp. 34–40) the primary concern of élitist theory is to maintain political stability by promoting processes and structures for decision-making more accommodating to efficiency than to popular equality in participation. This argument has been

<sup>(18)</sup> Bryce (1921), p. 132.

<sup>(19)</sup> For example, see Bottomore (1965); Walker (1966); Bachrach (1967); Pateman (1970).



pursued to arrogant extremes by those who consider popular participation leads inevitably to a weakening, if not the destruction of the democratic order. Typical of this attitude is Seymour Lipset who has asserted that the preference for widely based practices of citizen participation is of appeal primarily "to the disgruntled, the psychologically homeless, to the personal failures, the socially isolated, the economically insecure, the uneducated, unsophisticated and authoritarian persons at every level of society."<sup>(20)</sup> Walker (1966) has argued strongly against this thesis, citing examples from the numerous social movements to have emerged in American society during the past one hundred years. Conceding that some have been highly esoteric and apolitical, Walker concludes that many, by making extensive demands on the political system, whether born of frustration or an emergence of new areas of social need, have served "to break society's log jams, to prevent ossification in the political system, to prompt and justify major innovations in social policy and economic organisation."<sup>(21)</sup>

Lipset (1960) has pointed out that the matter of citizen participation may be viewed from at least two distinct and opposite positions, i.e. whether participation is expected to result in consensus, or whether it is suspected of resulting in political cleavage. He asks "Under what conditions can a society have 'sufficient' participation to maintain the democratic system without introducing sources of cleavage which will undermine the cohesion?"<sup>(22)</sup> On the continuum of democratic decision-making there is possibly no single point at which participation is consistently required, expected or meaningful, so there may be validity in the thesis that increased levels of participation, in practice through elections, or in aspiration by variously motivated groups, is indicative of a potential decline in social cohesion, and the breakdown of the traditional democratic processes. Whichever (i.e. cohesion or cleavage) is true in any particular situation, the level of participation is likely to reflect the intentions of the citizen to act out the norms expected of him.

<sup>(20)</sup> Lipset (1960), p. 175.

<sup>(21)</sup> Walker (1966), p. 294.

<sup>(22)</sup> Lipset (1960), pp. 32-33.

*The democratic citizen.* There would appear to be no single unchallenged code of citizen behaviour; this must be surprising if Plato's argument that citizen's values affect the stability and order of political institutions is valid. Many political scientists and philosophers have considered the status and responsibilities which collectively contribute to the norms of citizenship (e.g. Thompson (1970)).

Thompson's recent thesis is particularly relevant to the discussion of participation theory. His definition of citizenship is clearly activist; it holds the key to political influence through the media of participation, discussion, voting and through the movement towards political equality. Central to Thompson's hypothesis is the insistence that citizenship is the principal prerequisite for the state of democracy, particularly because citizenship as active political participation facilitates measures of influence over the processes and institutions of decision-making. Three perspectives on democracy may be differentiated—the scientific, the religious and the humanist.<sup>(23)</sup> Thompson has considered these and has identified two areas of significant coincidence. The first of these is that citizens should be considered the best judges of their own interests (the principle of citizen autonomy), and the second is that citizens are capable of making better political and social decisions than they do at present (the principle of citizen self-improvement). The implication of these 'principles' is that elected representatives and public servants are obliged to seek and seriously consider the opinions and support of the citizenry in decision-making. This notion has weighty significance for planners who claim, as part of their mystique, an exceptional ability to perceive and operate in the shape of the public interest (Davies, 1972). However, it might not be appropriate to interpret the two areas of coincidence identified by Thompson as necessarily advocating or imposing the practices of 'direct democracy' or total participation by those enfranchised to act; rather, their importance might best be construed as obligating *de facto* decision-makers to be cognisant of the values, beliefs and needs of the citizenry, to activate those sections of the community which generally fail to articulate their views, in order

<sup>(23)</sup> For specific consideration of these perspectives see: (a) for 'scientific'—Dewey (1939); Kelson (1948); Ross (1952); (b) for 'religious'—Simon (1951); (c) for 'humanist'—Friedrich (1963); MacIver (1964); Cole (1920).

to derive or at least expose a totality of relevant matters, and to cultivate the necessary levels of political competence in the citizenry. Such obligations would require vast changes in the procedures of decision-making usually practised in planning.

The two 'principles' of citizen autonomy and citizen self-improvement are inextricably linked in Thompson's review with his four strands of democratic activity, and his composite commentary affords a useful interpretation of an assumed objective of democracy, viz. that decisions are made on behalf of, and in the interests of the citizenry. The ability of each citizen to appreciate and then adequately and appropriately articulate his or her own needs, beliefs, values and interests is the crucial factor in concepts of popular participation in community decision-making; there are situations in which the impediments to and the impediments flowing from the pursuit of high levels of citizen participation are too serious to contemplate, for example, 'whose finger on the nuclear key?' Yet, Thompson perceives, but fails to adequately indicate, 'levels' in decision-making in which widespread popular involvement should be mandatory to obviate the tendency for political manipulation or coercion. Any exposure of pertinent public views should contribute to a more informed decision outcome; yet Thompson, with most other political commentators, does not advocate total exposure of relevant information, and does not dismiss power-sharing forms in which an élite corps is ultimately responsible for making *the* decision. Idyllic notions of classical democracy are largely irrelevant in modern mass and complex societies; but, if there is to be a more 'democratic' process than that afforded by élitism, what is it, and how can it overcome the difficulty of unexpected citizen behaviour and preference expressions? It is possible to interpret the Marxist approach to political participation as a 'bridge' between the potential radicalism of participant cultures of direct democracy and the conservatism of élitist decision-making forms. This is the area for consideration next.

#### *Marxism and Political Participation*

Although the simplistic assumption that Marxist propositions are particularly pro-participationist is generally valid, there are remark-

able concessions to élitist preferences; this is especially true of Marx's statements on the organisation of 'the' revolution. In studies of the evolutionary development of participatory democracy, not all commentators include references to the contribution of Marx. This, and the time-specific and culture-specific context of his statements, theories and actions lend confusion to an objective evaluation of his contribution.

Two phases may be differentiated in the development of Marxist thought, particularly in so far as it has relevance to this study of participatory democracy. In the first phase there is the revelation that political activity is the 'universal' duty of every citizen. This notion seems to have originated from the deep study of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, and of Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1762) which occupied the early years of the nineteenth century. In the interim period between this first and second phase Marx reinterpreted his own proposition, moving away from the simplistic 'classical' form of total citizen involvement and towards a participation zeal derived from a perceived duty to redress imbalances in the prevailing power struggle, this zeal being the momentum necessary to bridge the gap in the élitist-dominated decision-making forum and to educate the mass citizenry to satisfactory levels of competence and responsibility. In the second phase, of more mature and reasoned argument and less emotionally-charged rhetoric, there is a perceptible redirection of purpose of mass involvement in political activity, away from the socio-political concerns of individual welfare and towards the heightening of response for changes in the power structure to revolutionary proportions.<sup>(24)</sup> With this degree of action as a potential political act, the participant was expected to be consciously sympathetic and determined: in fact, Marx's prerequisites for successful, meaningful and intrinsically satisfying participation included (a) a thorough understanding of political theory, (b) an organisation capable of accurately articulating the aspirations and preferences of its people, and (c) a 'will' to work for change to achieve goal preferences. Marx

<sup>(24)</sup> "Revolution in general... is a political act", Marx (1844), *The King of Prussia and Social Reform*, cited in Evans (1972), p. 133.

was not unmindful of the size of the task to educate the mass citizenry to the level required in order that it may meaningfully participate in the power struggle, but he expressed faith in the will of the mass uneducated Soviet citizenry to educate itself.

A different view on the ability of the citizenry to meaningfully participate in decision-making has been held by the protagonists of more overt revolution to achieve change, i.e. by such as Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky.

In the current activities of many activist community and interest groups, even those whose constituents are essentially middle class—for example, conservation and preservation groups, residents associations, environmentalist lobbies, and so on—some of the concepts of the Marxist philosophy may be observed; for example, the determination to elucidate the bureaucratic decision-making channels, the establishment of an organisational identity, the determination to overcome the vacillations of the bureaucracy and its political overlords, the adoption (or diligent development) of the skills necessary to prosecute an equally-balanced technical argument with the bureaucratic adversary, the use of media opportunities to expose, provoke and attract, and the employment of socio-economic sanctions to frustrate, harass and obstruct. The case history of citizen participation in the various dimensions of social welfare is witnessing the prosecution of Marxist-type 'revolutionary' acts; but, urban and regional planning has not yet been subjected to the ferocity of some of the possible participationist techniques of 'persuasion', perhaps because the most volatile contexts have been inner-city area redevelopments—(*per se* or for freeway development purposes)—and these are similar in character, or because the participants fail to shake off their cloaks of middle-class respectability and sense of 'fair play'. Certainly, there is a divergence of political purpose in these two examples; whereas in the first, reference to Marxist techniques would have been accepted, in the second, the sheer possibility must nearly induce a state of apoplexy in the breasts of most luke-warm participants.

Marx set out his preferred organisational structure to effect political change in *The Civil War in France* (1871). In this may be observed his clear preference for the use of the 'delegate' as the most suitable form of representative. The 'delegate' stamped the decisions of the

committees with legitimacy.<sup>(25)</sup> However, even within this system, the problem of defining the specification for and of the 'delegate' was of special concern; Marx was expressly unhappy at the likelihood that a non-working class socialist intellectual élite would emerge to 'represent' the needs and aspirations of a client group with which it was not in sympathy through experience.<sup>(26)</sup> This remains a dilemma in many current planning contexts: advocacy on behalf of a client group by 'representatives' from a different cultural or socio-economic life-style.

There is a patent need to develop a rapport between the many participation-aspiring community and interest groups, and the politicians and bureaucrats. To achieve this, Marx advocated educative and instrumental revolution. The ideological connotations of adopting such procedures are most likely anathema to many groups, yet, whether the procedures are linked to such emotionally-associated persons and causes, or whether they are derived from the more universally applicable philosophies of Rousseau, Hobbes or even Burke, the requirements remain unchanged: these are the *education* of participants to reasonable levels of responsibility and competence, and the construction of suitable *instruments* to achieve meaningful levels of participation. The difficulty, if not impossibility, of meeting these requirements strengthens the decision-making focus of the élitists.

#### *Democracy, Participation and Élitism*

In the introduction to his essay on democratic élitism, Bachrach (1967) predicates the differences between democracy and élitism as being one of degree on the interpretation of (a) the role and means of government and (b) the notice to be taken of 'interests' in decision-making. This position extends between the common interpretation of the difference, viz., government by many or by a select few. In spite of the wide compass of élitist theories, two fundamental assumptions are perceptibly consistent: the first is that society, as a *mass* is inherently politically naive, incompetent and apathetic; the second

<sup>(25)</sup> Marx (1871), *The Civil War in France*, p. 162; see also *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*, p. 123.

<sup>(26)</sup> Evans (1972).

is that this *mass* is either passive, inert and pliable, or volatile, unruly and possessed of an insatiable proclivity to undermine government, liberty and culture. To overcome the organisational and cultural difficulties caused by the complex interaction of these descriptive symptoms, the *élitists* propose the inescapable corollary and solution, i.e., the need for a ruling, creative and dominant *élite*. These assumptions are generally shared by the *élitist* theorists, whether their own ideological or philosophical persuasion is reactionary, revolutionary, liberal or conservative, and the differences that exist between them are concerned essentially with the political objectives toward which the *élite*-manipulated mass should be directed. For example, Lenin advocated a highly dedicated, able and disciplined *élite* to free the mass, and to lead it to the Leninist promised land; Ortega, from the politically opposite viewpoint, advocated a cultured *élite* to subdue the mass, in so doing placing it in the passive and deferential status he considered appropriate to its inherent mediocrity.

A careful study of the democratic-*élitism* theories reveals a sufficiency of sympathy with democratic ideals for them to be considered derivatives of democracy, in the form of reappraised and revised statements of some of its characteristics. To support this contention it may be pointed out that few *élitists* advocate a totally 'closed' political *élite* unresponsive to such democratic practices as elections. The very nature of modern complex society, and the complicated institutional and political processes and structures which have been developed to manage society's affairs, would seem to demand a decision-making system requiring co-operative participation from *élites* and masses, with inter-related responsibilities and responses. An *élite*-mass formula for decision-making seems inescapable.<sup>(27)</sup> If this view is tenable, the prevailing system of democracy is one in which the emphasis is placed on stability, and the execution of liberal and constitutional processes; in which political vitality is generated and maintained by competition among *élites*; in which public accountability to the electorate is required at periodic elections; and in which

<sup>(27)</sup> For example: (a) "the key political, economic and social decisions" are made by "tiny minorities" (Dahl, 1964); (b) "Mass democracy has, through its very nature, thrown up on all sides specialised groups of leaders—what are sometimes called *élites*" (Carr, 1951).

there exist opportunities for access to the decision-making élite by those groups and individuals bothering to organise and to articulate their requirements, grievances and proposals. In this system, the citizen is expected to act out a passive role, and, as has been mentioned previously, the maintenance of political stability is dependent upon it. This pluralist concept follows closely the theory of polyarchy (Dahl, 1956).

The most extreme élitist theorists advocate drastic revisions to the process and structure of democratic decision-making.<sup>(28)</sup> Their conception involves an essentially passive acquiescent role for the individuals comprising the mass of society; the role specification is dynamic only to the extent of accommodating the exercise of the inalienable freedom and responsibility to vote, of bringing views and sentiments to the attention of particular élites, and of countenancing the attempts to attain élitist status by means of 'acceptable' political activity. In their view, any more dynamic activity in the role, particularly if it successfully awakened the more generally alienated and apathetic sections of the community, is to be deprecated because it would be likely to unbalance the political equilibrium even to the extent of disrupting the political and cultural order. Thus, the classic democratic conception is reversed by the extreme élitists: the mass rather than the élites is considered to be the potential threat to the political system, and the élites rather than the mass its saviours and defenders.<sup>(29)</sup>

In order to gain a measure of comprehensiveness in the study of élitism, a brief review follows of (a) the classic élitist theories, (b) Pranger's (1968) discussion of the eclipse of citizenship, and (c) the Marxist interpretation of the élitist thesis.

#### *The Classic Élitist Thesis*

The classic texts of élitist thought and theory are generally considered to be Pareto's *The Mind and Society* (1935); Mosca's *The Ruling Class* (1939); Michel's *Political Parties* (1915); Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* (1942); Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism and*

<sup>(28)</sup> For example, Schumpeter (1943); Lipset (1959).

<sup>(29)</sup> Bachrach (1967), p. 9.



*Democracy* (1943); and C. Wright Mill's *The Power Elite* (1956). Of these, the first two, the Italian sociological treatises, relate to thought towards the end of the nineteenth century, whilst the remainder are more modern and culturally relevant. The literature of élitism, whether original, or of criticism, or of commentary on the classic works is extensive,<sup>(30)</sup> but throughout most there is a captivating, almost pathological concern for the efficient operation of decision-making processes and structures, exhibiting varying degrees of reaction and over-reaction to contemporary or expected future events. There is a danger in adopting either a unanimous and unequivocal sympathy with the élitist cause, or a polarised contempt for it. An argument has been pursued by Dahl (1964), that any continuation of the movement espousing equality of power as a major democratic aim in the knowledge of its impracticability in any large political system is tantamount to encouraging further cynicism toward democracy, from both participants and the aspiring participants.

The common denominator in many of the élitist theses is the concern with the existence of a *single*, cohesive and dominant élite, and with the nature of such an élite. Two important exceptions to this generalisation are the pluralist versions (Dahl, 1961; Potter, 1961), in which there is a competitive struggle for power among a number of élites. Empirical evidence from history supports the contention of the classic élitists that dominant power status is achieved by means beyond the ballot box. However, in modern society, the electorate assumes that of the decision-making fraternity at least *some* have been elected to the positions of power. The élitists contend that the appearance of majority democratic control over the minority is deceptive; their contention is based on the assumption that the minority almost invariably achieves a position from which it is possible, if necessary, to manipulate the electoral process by means of simple electorate coercion, bribery, skilled use of propaganda, or the judicious selection of 'favoured' candidates. Recent, almost universal popular concern with allegations and revelations of ballot-rigging,

<sup>(30)</sup> For concise statements and criticisms of the major theories and theorists see Bachrach (1967) and Parry (1969); for inspiration, or provocation, see either the original works, or translations of them, and the writings of Lippman (1930, 1965) and Lipset (1960).

political campaign funding, and potential manipulation of the electoral system,<sup>(31)</sup> among the possible catalogue of manipulative exercises, lend credence to the élitist hypothesis. The apex and culmination of such exercises is the 'selection' of leaders acceptable to the power élite by the sovereign voters. In this way the paramount minority élite escapes control by, and accountability to the majority, the mass of society. Michels has claimed such evasion of popular control by the élite is total, and is evidenced by the events of history: "Historical evolution mocks all the prophylactic measures that have been adopted for the preventing of oligarchy. If laws are passed to control the dominance of the leaders, it is the laws which gradually weaken, and not the leaders."<sup>(32)</sup>

Parry (1969) described the situation as one in which the élitists are convinced no mechanism exists to ensure the popular accountability of the élite, and no process or power is available to prevent the élite from imposing its supremacy over the remainder of society.

Within the general theory of élitism there co-exist significant differences in the interpretation of qualitative and opportunity prerequisites for the attainment of élite status. The catalogue of inherent and assumed qualitative criteria for membership of the élite include political skill, attributes of power-wielding and organisation, personal charismatic qualities of leadership; these qualities inter-act with others of similar characteristics, to render the élite continuously capable of exploiting their position, of preserving their dominance, and of reinforcing their position, all of which perpetuate and increase the distance between the élite and the mass of society. Of the classical élitists theorists there are variable interpretations of the most significant prerequisites; for example, Mosca and Michels contend that the élite owes its power predominantly to its organisational competences, Pareto emphasises the relative psychological traits of the two groups (i.e. élite and mass); Burnham makes reference to the control of economic resources (i.e. relating élitism and Marxism); and C. Wright Mills points to the key positions its members enjoy

<sup>(31)</sup> In the 1974 Australian elections, opposition parties alleged the government party would have effectively guaranteed itself in office almost in perpetuity by redefining electoral divisions, and re-classifying electorates.

<sup>(32)</sup> Michels (1915), (1958 edition), p. 423.

in the significant social and political institutions. Each of these theorists view the mass of society as too encumbered by a lack of organisation to participate in meaningful concerted political action. Mills asserts each individual in the mass apparently prefers to concentrate upon and operate within his own perception of his personal socio-politico-economic milieu<sup>(33)</sup>; such a perception obviously fails to comprehend the totality of society and its activities. It is certainly this insular, anthropocentric, almost selfish approach that bedevils the operation of urban and regional planning. The mass inertia may be disturbed and activated by leadership, but spontaneous activism is almost impossible. Mosca and Michels may seem to have been ungenerous, even derogatory in their assessment of the mass as politically incompetent, apathetic, inert, politically unambitious, psychologically needing guidance and direction; but seldom does the activity of the mass invalidate their view.

Of particular significance to the operation of participatory democracy, within which one or other form of élitism almost inevitably prevails, are the attributes of the exclusiveness and practical flexibility of the élites. That there is more than a single degree of élitism is apparent from the descriptions of Mosca, Pareto and Mills: "Below the highest stratum in the ruling class there is always...another that is more numerous and comprises all the capacities, for leadership in the country. Without such a class any sort of social organisation would be impossible."<sup>(34)</sup> This level affords the bridge between the élitist core of decision-makers and the remainder of society. It has a mediating, information gathering and dissemination role; it may constitute the training ground and source for recruitment to the upper élite echelon; it is almost without exception the level at which 'outsiders' first enter the élite corps. "From within it come the committees that direct political groupings, the speakers who address assemblies and meetings, the men who make and publish the newspapers, and finally that small number of persons who are capable of forming opinions of their own as to people and events of the day, and therefore exercise great influence on the many who are not capable of having opinions of their own and are ready, perhaps

<sup>(33)</sup> Mills (1956), pp. 312 ff.

<sup>(34)</sup> Mosca (1939), p. 404.

without knowing it, always to follow the opinions of others."<sup>(35)</sup> It is likely that the bureaucracy, itself composed of members or agents of the lower stratum of the élite, becomes impregnated with the values and standards of the ruling élite, in the prosecution of its duties; and it is this which, in the eyes of the underprivileged sections of the mass, renders the professional, and particularly the planner, liable to the charge of attempting to impose alien values and standards upon those for whom he alleges he is working.

Élitist theorists have been frequently at pains to establish a scientific or methodological rationale for their views, in so doing obviating the need to offer ethical comment, or to substantiate their pronouncements with a moral rationale; for example, Michels assumed the 'laws' he fashioned and described to be "beyond good and evil", and Burnham claimed his responsibility was to attest the validity of his propositions rather than to pass moral judgement upon them. With this detached, sectional attitude it has proved to be an uncomplicated task for the élitists to demolish many of the more idyllic associations of democratic theory, especially those of equality and popular sovereignty. The early élitists attacked Marxism, particularly by denigrating the significance of the economic struggle for power whilst elevating that of the political dimension. Élite domination, they claimed, was inevitable, predicting that even the leaders of the emerging (at their time of writing) socialist parties would discard their proletarian origins or inclinations once the process of assimilation into the environment of the bourgeois middle-class élite had become established. During the period of the almost incessant debate on the extension of the franchise in Britain, Bagehot referred to the inevitable deference of the public to the theatrical side of government and decision-making, which *de facto* abdicated power to the anonymous bureaucrats and the ruling cliques. A mechanism of the democratic expression of limited power-sharing is the party political system which ostensibly relies upon mass popular support. However, Ostrogorski (1902) has asserted the patent inevitability that the élite would gain power even under the system of party government.

<sup>(35)</sup> Mosca (1939), p. 410.

*Eclipse of Citizenship*

In his study of power and participation in contemporary politics, Pranger (1968) has described democracy as "élite governance with periodic election ceremonials".<sup>(36)</sup> As with Bagehot, this use of the theatrical metaphor is indicative of a vivid, if occasionally both tragic and comic, interpretation of the power struggle; it speaks of a system dominated by competing cliques, with the mass public as spectators. One significant attempt to invalidate the élitists' criticisms of the meaningfulness of citizenship concerned the development of a group dynamics model (Lewin, 1960) in which leaders emerged from within the (community) group rendering decision-making participation possible because of the inherent characteristics and structure of the group. Any nuclear group capable of this self-generation would not be in need of leadership from an external, detached and self-conceived élite. The hypothesis was drawn on the experience of small experimental groups, and may not hold its validity on the frequently immense scale of modern decision-making constituencies.<sup>(37)</sup> As if lending support to the advance of élitism, Pranger has reported that "the citizen, whose chief duty is to participate, is disappearing as an important political actor."<sup>(38)</sup> This progressive demise of an important and integral participant in democratic decision-making processes is almost certainly a means of erosion of classical political values, because values, or principles or opportunities can only be sustained if they are perpetually practised, supported or used. Although Pranger's thesis is particularly concerned with political activity at the national level, there are clear parallels of relevance to urban and regional planning at the local level. The gradual decline of citizen participation at any level of decision-making inevitably results in the replacement of key participants by "apathetic, mindless 'non-élites' who at best vote occasionally and 'orient' themselves periodically to increasingly distant and irresponsible oligarchs."<sup>(39)</sup> Six general dimensions of this matter may be distinguished. These include the prescrip-

<sup>(36)</sup> Pranger (1968), p. 3.

<sup>(37)</sup> Dahl has discussed this possibility (*Am. Pol. Sc. Rev.*, vol. lxi, December 1967, pp. 953-70).

<sup>(38)</sup> Pranger (1968), p. 3.

<sup>(39)</sup> Pranger (1968), p. 10.

tion of the 'action-space' and the subjects with which citizen participation is feasible, and the development of an élite-mass relationship ideology. To overcome the possible imbalance of power—assuming Pranger's concept of the demise of citizenship is valid—and to infuse the decision-making processes with a capability of meaningful citizen participation, the elected representatives should be responsible and take the initiative to develop the means by which, and prescribe the 'action-space' in which the citizens may more creatively affect decision outcomes. Without the development of such means, and without the willing acquiescence of the ruling élite(s), the present graph of citizen participation is unlikely to rise. In this situation, the eclipse of meaningful citizenship becomes an inevitability. The reasons for this will necessarily be complex and inter-related, but in summary they will most likely include the inherent inertia characteristic of political masses (the élitists' principal argument), the impracticability of orthodox representative institutions to function adequately for the purposes of all parties, or the spasmodic functioning of conventional participation mechanisms. There is some evidence that a failure to exercise those opportunities for participation which are occasionally presented serves particularly to encourage the imposition of more restrictive forms of oligarchy; the chain reaction may be perpetuated, thereby gradually denying any vestige of meaningful public involvement.<sup>(40)</sup>

This interpretation of élitism by default of popular expression has almost universal application. As the citizen exercises his option to assume less and less responsibility for making community decisions, as he effectively 'delegates' his power, as he acquiesces to the challenges of political power dynamics, and as he is manipulated by charismatic leadership, he becomes of marginal significance to the focus of decision-making power. The occasional forays into the decision-making environment may whet the political appetite of the participant-enthusiast; but, almost without exception, upon the discovery of his own real identity, lack of political acumen and experience, and lack of definitive, penetrative and persuasive argument, he feels obliged to retire into the environment of interest (rather than partici-

<sup>(40)</sup> Pranger (1968), p. 18.

pation) to which he is most accustomed. McLuhan (1964) has aptly described the ineffectiveness of the inexperienced, occasional performer.<sup>(41)</sup>

It may be convincingly argued that élites have assumed and maintained political supremacy because of deficient expressions and awareness of the principles of democratic decision-making; the chief miscreants are undoubtedly the citizens, who have had the most to yield to sectional interests and who have successfully achieved just that *by default*.<sup>(42)</sup> Pranger's description of the processes of "the vanishing citizen" is salutary; it is supported, almost with variance, by the many unflattering profiles of citizen electoral behaviour and competence.<sup>(43)</sup>

#### *Élitism and Marxism*

The classic élitists propound a theory of citizen incompetence; Pranger has described an apparent willingness of the citizenry to adopt passive and acquiescent postures; and the Marxist philosophy seems to bridge the two lines of argument with its conditional acceptance of the inevitability of élitist-type decision-making structures. The similarity of effect, if not of generation, is remarked upon by Pareto and Mosca who set out as much to refute the Marxist thesis as to explore and establish a neutral political science.<sup>(44)</sup> In their attempt to discredit and refute the Marxist political philosophy, Pareto and Mosca attacked on two fronts, firstly on the claims of scientific validity, and secondly on the ideological myth of power sharing. A common purpose pervades the literature of the classic élitists and Marx, and this is the insistent attempt to expose the fallaciousness of the liberalism prevalent in nineteenth-century Europe. The divorce between them is derived from their respective remedies, the Marxists

<sup>(41)</sup> McLuhan (1964), chap. 31.

<sup>(42)</sup> See, for example, the concept of political socialisation in Hyman (1959). Hyman states "humans must learn their political behaviour early and well and persist in it. Otherwise there would be no regularity—perhaps even chaos" (p. 17).

<sup>(43)</sup> See, for example, Key (1961), *Public Opinion and American Democracy*, Knopf, New York; Key and Cummings (1966), *The Responsible Electorate*, Harvard U. P., Cambridge, Mass.; Arendt, H. (1958), *The Human Conditions*, Doubleday, New York.

<sup>(44)</sup> The ideas considered in this section are based largely on Parry (1969); Evans (1972); and Geras (1972).

favouring a stimulated revolution from a working-class base, the élitists conservatively preferring further entrenchment of élite caucuses.

There can be little doubt that in most crucial respects, Marxism and élitism are fundamentally antagonistic, and that their philosophies are irreconcilable, particularly with regard to their relative weighting of the significance of political and economic forces.<sup>(45)</sup> Commentators on the development of Marxist thought frequently remark on the sequence of changes of emphasis, and on the inescapable flavour of élitism associated with the proliferation of particular groups such as the 'élite' corps of workers extolled for their phenomenal productivity, others of party-origin committees, the 'élite' of delegates to the Supreme Soviet, the 'élite' of certain prestigious occupational groups, and so on. Marx is on record conceding the general spectrum of intellectual deficiencies evident in the working class; he has been particularly scathing on the inability of many citizens to comprehend and rationally cope with even domestic trivia.<sup>(46)</sup> It was to overcome this acute potential frustration to the revolution that Marx, at the First International, insisted upon coincident programmes for the educational, physical and technological training of juvenile workers. An almost inevitable consequence of universal training opportunities would be the emergence of an embryo-élite, differentiated from the mass by superior mental, physical or practical skills. This is one of the cited reasons for the disagreement between Lenin and Trotsky at the 1903 congress of the RSDLP. Trotsky has recorded his objection to the apparent likelihood of the future creation and of policies of the central party by an 'élite' composed on the narrow basis of a small group of Marxist intellectuals rather than from the 'grass roots' broad base of widespread worker participation.<sup>(47)</sup>

<sup>(45)</sup> It may be argued that Burnham (1942) is significantly associated with the doctrine of (Marxist) economic determinism. Ricci (1971), however, has argued that the derivations of liberalism, conservatism and socialism are identical (pp. 7-31).

<sup>(46)</sup> See, for example, *Documents I* (August 1866), p. 345.

<sup>(47)</sup> *Rapport de la Délégation Sibérienne* (1970), p. 60. The use of the terms 'élite' and 'grass roots' in this context is based on an interpretation of the more lengthy descriptions penned by Trotsky. The Trotsky-Lenin split is widely reported in the writings of both, and in many commentaries on the period.



There are, therefore, some similarities between Marxism and Élitism; but there is a significant difference in their general prescriptions for decision-making power structures and processes. There remains one further dimension of the spectrum of theories of participation to be explored.

*Demospeciocracy*

Postulated as worthy of practical experiment is the theory of *demospeciocracy* (Bahm, 1972). Its generation springs from the claims of a continuing decline in democracy due to the increasing separation of voters from the effective act (and actors) of deciding, and the increasing complexity of areas in which decisions are required. The theory aspires to combine the advantages of (classical) democracy with the benefits of scientific method by the use of nine 'agencies'. These 'agencies' are required to perform particular functions (see Milbrath's hierarchy of political involvement, pp. 125-6). Bahm has designated the tasks and the agencies thus:

Tasks	'Agencies'
1. to determine the issues for legislation	Initiators
2. to direct the calendar of legislation	Steerers
3. to research all aspects of the issues	Researchers
4. to present the information	Informers
5. to test competence of legislators	Examiners
6. to administer 5 and tabulate votes	Voting supervisors
7. to review needs for legislation	Planners
8. to adjudicate on the law	Judges
9. to administer the system	Administrators

There can be little doubt that the application of organisational methods to the political process is often desirable from many points of view. However, Bahm's proposition seems only to crystallize those areas in the process which could most easily be susceptible to élitist practices. Without the resort to the classical period's procedures of 'appointment' to the various levels of government, or to the revolu-

tionary governmental systems that are of significantly short duration, in the both of which there is a reasonable chance for citizens to attain effective decision-making status in the community, the opportunities for possibly increased levels of élitism seem assured in the system of demospéciocracy; and this, in spite of the brave attempt to further democratise the political decision-making process.

The diversity of interpretations of democracy and participation considered in this brief review has scarcely done justice to the available literature, yet from even this restricted discussion it is possible to achieve some awareness of the range of practices that could pass for participation in the processes of democracy, and of the scope for misconceptions. This review has concentrated on the theoretical aspects of democracy and participation, and has consciously neglected the necessary translation or amplification that follows the exposure of case studies. The opportunity to compare theory with practice is delayed until Chapters 7, 8 and 9. In his succinct description of some of the maladies besetting modern society Bahm (1972) has revealed the real dilemma that frustrates all attempts at rational consideration of the participation argument. The crux of the problem is this:

"Not everyone is equally qualified to decide intelligently upon all issues. Individual differences exist. In certain respects, all men are equal and have equally inalienable rights. But in certain other respects they differ, and although it may be possible and desirable to reduce those differences, there are limits beyond which we cannot go in alienating such differences. Now it must be granted that moron and genius alike should have rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and to the various freedoms which grow in number as men become more humanitarian. But that a man has a right, much less a duty, to decide upon a public policy which he cannot understand must be challenged. The wisdom of rejecting older bases for determining inequality, such as race, sex, royalty, color or religion, is not questioned. But the rejection of these inadequate reasons does not, in fact, eliminate vast differences in ability to legislate wisely.... If the soundness of legislation rests upon understanding the issues

involved, then achievement of such understanding should be the criterion for achieving votership or legislatorsip rather than any other irrelevant characteristic, no matter how widely possessed in common by mankind."<sup>(48)</sup>

There is an inescapable proclivity towards the practice of élitism, using 'comprehension of the issues involved' as the single criterion to merit participation in decision-making.

A critical review of the Skeffington Report (1969) considers the investigating committee saw "participation as a pilgrim's progress, leading from ignorance and apathy to understanding, consensus and constructive action" (Levin and Donnison, 1969). It is argued that participation and agreement are characteristics of the liberal-democratic, (i.e. the 'good') society, but it may perhaps be more successfully argued in the context of modern complex and mass society that the public should select representatives who are committed to known and favoured (by the majority) policies, and who will appoint competent professional and administrative staff to execute the democratically derived decisions; i.e., these executors should be accountable to the public *through* the elected representatives. Similarly, the argument is strong that conflict between the various interests in mass society is inevitable, and that the most widely acceptable resolution would be by staged explicit public contests leading to compromise; the expectation of reaching unfettered and equivocal agreements is largely absurd.

It is to the two key concepts of 'representation' and 'the public interest' that attention is now directed.

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<sup>(48)</sup> Bahm (1972), pp. 98-99.

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## CHAPTER 2

### Two Key Concepts— Representation; The Public Interest

There are obvious dangers in isolating for special consideration a limited number of the vast range of matters contributing to the concept and operation of democracy. However, it is possible that the investigation of a number of matters will serve two purposes: firstly, it might reveal the complexity of the democratic decision-making process which would flow on from a study in depth of the full range of pertinent matters, and secondly, it might serve to clarify the ramifications of those matters investigated. In the preceding discussion of the possible concepts of participatory democracy passing reference was made to the frequency, variety and often inappropriate use of political and quasi-political terms which has contributed to the prevailing lack of precision of them. The almost inevitable attraction of emotive responses to such terms is exemplified by the two isolated for examination in this chapter; these are 'representation', and 'the public interest'. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate some of the important conceptual and operational dimensions of these terms so as to provide benchmarks for a better understanding of citizen participation.

In the pursuit of this objective, albeit as a side issue, there will be an inevitable distillation of the aura of mysticism that surrounds the planner and his role, and the most significant basis on which the planner functions—that he is the custodian of the public preferences and its interests (Davies, 1972)—will be seriously questioned.

Catherine Bower Wurster has perhaps pointed to the reason for the growth of the planner's arrogance and his self-perception of

personal charisma; her enunciation of the constraints on the consumer-approach to planmaking<sup>(1)</sup> has highlighted a void in public competence which the planner considers himself competent to fill. Inevitably, in situations in which the public has shown itself to be manifestly incapable of satisfactorily expressing its goals and objectives, and in which a meaningful expression has been necessary to achieve progress in the process of plan-making, it has been the planner (even to a greater degree than the elected representatives, the politicians) who has assumed the responsibility to add precision where none existed, and to expose and expand the list of pertinent considerations. In so doing he has been (a) acting out the political role of the representative, and (b) exercising a guardianship of the public interest. There must be a case to be made that, with operational experience of this kind and the support of the required technical skills, the planner becomes the most suitable person (or his role becomes the most suitable vehicle) to achieve a generally acceptable plan.

However, it may be reasonably argued that this process of decision-making is both élitist and bureaucratic, and perhaps more critically, too removed from the core of the democratic philosophy and process. In the considerations of 'representation' and 'the public interest' which follow, an attempt will be made to clarify the dilemmas surrounding the practices and responsibilities of decision-making, and to provide a basis upon which to draw personal conclusions about these matters, and a framework for an examination of the many other significant matters which make up the concept and practice of citizen participation. Necessarily, and particularly because these are areas about which planners are often naïve, the discussion will range through the literature of social and political science.

<sup>(1)</sup> "Conscious consumer wants are limited by experience and knowledge...by and large you can only want what you know...what we (i.e., the planners) really want to know, therefore, is what people would want if they understood the full range of possibilities on the one hand, and all the practical limitations on the other" (cited in Keeble (1969), *Principles and Practice of Town and Country Planning*, Estates Gazette, London, p. 2).

## REPRESENTATION

The first of the key concepts to be discussed is 'representation'. Immediately, the consideration of relevant matters and concepts is thrown into confusion by observations that the most common conceptions of representation are obsolete (Eulau, 1966), and that to introduce the complexities of representation theory to considerations of democratic theory is to confuse the latter unnecessarily with metaphysical argument (Mayo, 1960). It must be apparent that the scale of mass society renders inoperable the decision mechanisms of classical democracy, no matter how relevant they might have been in earlier periods; equally, if only from the media reports, the groundswell of disaffection with council members renders ineffectual the mechanisms associated with modern democratic representative government. "It now appears that the representativeness of a modern democratic government is not achieved through any single channel.... For a person to be represented with respect to all of his interests with which government concerns itself (there is need for).... The existence of numerous and varied avenues of representation, each by virtue of its own peculiar nature, seeing, reflecting, attempting to effectuate a slightly different facet of that great conglomerate of desires and interests that make up the electorate."<sup>(2)</sup> It may be possible to argue then, that 'representation' is more properly to be interpreted as (a) *a vehicle* for the expression of popular aspirations, desires, needs, and so on, related to the conduct of everyday living, and as (b) *a process* in which various forms of vehicle are used to achieve a meaningful degree of consumer satisfaction (Birch, 1964). Thus representation is a means of achieving predetermined and preferred ends.

A further contextual point needs to be made. The present operation of representative forms of government or decision-making is significantly divorced in time from the revolutionary period during which most modern representational forms were born in the spirit of liberty, equality, and fraternity; yet, at that time, as now, the clamour for change was brought about by a dissatisfaction with prevailing deci-

<sup>(2)</sup> Pennock (1968), pp. 26-27.



sion-making systems and mechanisms.<sup>(3)</sup> In the ensuing discussion of 'representation', only passing reference is made to the classic treatises, such as those of John Stuart Mill and Edmund Burke; the weight of consideration is given to those studies which have emerged in more recent times, on occasions contemporary with the growth of dissatisfaction with the present representational forms. Of necessity, and deliberately, the considerations are rooted in theory; the translation into practical terms is left until later parts of the book for the reason advanced continually in these pages that each participation situation is peculiar; only a small number of general points exist upon which general conclusions and hypotheses may be drawn. However, the fundamental issues of representation contribute significantly to the story of participation. Popper's (1966) concept of "plastic control"—a description of the relationship of interacting and inter-deterministic systems—is a useful vehicle for a consideration of representational forms because it raises the issue of sources of control over both the representatives and the represented, sources which include the means of mutual adjustment, freedom, and rationality, among others. The plastic qualities of his concept are useful for participation exercises, provided all parties to the decision-making process are pliable, because it foreshadows the concurrent interaction of variously-competent and variously-motivated groups; but even Popper has failed to translate the idea into a definite decision-making structure. This may indicate the hopelessness of the search for comprehensive meaningful participation mechanisms.

The problem of the period of history in which the modern representational forms were constructed has been partially solved (e.g. Apter, 1968), but the time-translations have frequently produced cumbersome schema equally inappropriate for use now. In the final analysis, four matters seem to be consistently referred to, and together compose the core issues; these are, accountability, responsiveness, legitimate expressions of power, and the marshalling of popular opinion (Birch, 1964, 1971; Hill, 1974). It seems, from case study material, that the location of power is the crucial matter. Deci-

<sup>(3)</sup> Hill (1974), chap. 2; of relevance also is the observation of Donnison (1970), that the revolutionary representational concept of the eighteenth century has become "obscured beneath the dust of a decaying liberal faith".

sion-making situations which are not legitimised either by the exercise of responsive, responsible and accountable leadership, or by a meaningful degree of power-sharing, *where that is sought*, have frequently given rise to public unrest and not infrequently to overt disturbance. Perhaps the most obvious examples of situations in which the agitation for changes to the prevailing representational system have come are from civil rights and urban and regional planning.

Another issue to be aired is that most of the discussions of representation, as a concept or as a practical expression in (particularly) governmental concerns, are relevant to the national level of political decision-making, or to the translation of the same matters to the local level. Thus, care is needed in the translation of the many valuable case studies, with their derivation of general principles and indicators, to (a) a different level of decision-making, and especially to (b) a particular decision-making context. For urban and regional planning the note of caution is specially necessary because many of the options open to representatives and the public as a mass may be closed, or at best severely circumscribed by decisions taken at another (usually higher) level. The decision aids, such as AIDA, available to accommodate and overcome some of these difficulties are not yet in such common use as to neutralise the difficulties. Recent empirical studies tend to support the general expectation that the public *en masse*, is not significantly motivated by regional, or sub-regional planning and development. Thus, any attempt to introduce a tier of representatives to shepherd public opinion or to respond to public expressions at such levels would appear to be unnecessary. Yet, without a meaningful dialogue being generated between the decision-making body of (preferably) elected representatives and the consuming public, there is at least a need to resort to less responsive *ad hoc* representational forms. In fact, in most situations, the existence and operation of *any* form of representation is largely dictated by the political style of decision-making peculiar to the system of government, or the composition of the real focus of power in the decision-making body; in this respect, accidents of geography and demography are powerful determinants of the prosecution of democratic ideals.

In the context of philosophical constraints flowing from the issues aired briefly in the preceding paragraphs attention now turns to a number of discussions of 'representation', as a concept and as an instrument for achieving a significant measure of public sympathy and acceptance. The discussion explores four dimensions:

1. the degree to which one person can represent others (Griffiths, 1960);
2. the extent to which the matter is metaphysical (Pitkin, 1967);
3. the role of the bureaucracy in representative government (Niskanen, 1971);
4. the identification of leaders who can speak for a community (Fiedler *et al.*, 1971).

#### *Representation—the Operational Difficulties*

John Stuart Mill has observed that no matter the predisposition and benevolence of a representative towards the interests of those he represents he is rarely capable of an accurate degree of representation because each man knows his own interests most completely.<sup>(4)</sup> If such an observation is everywhere valid—and this may be challenged—meaningful representation is extant when, *and only when*, the ratio of interests to articulators is one-to-one. Griffiths (1960) has addressed himself to the question of the conditions under which the public may be properly represented. In his review of the pertinent matters he identifies four 'senses' of representation (Fig. 2.1). The first of these, *descriptive representation*, is that form in which one person represents others by being manifestly like them, by being an 'identikit' specimen or sample of the species or group and ensuring that its interests are protected and articulated. *Symbolic representation* is characterised by the assumption by an individual (the representative) of specific attitudes and expressions associated with identifiable interests, and in so doing becomes the dynamic embodiment of the 'spirit' of those interests. Both of these forms have common expressions in practices of citizen participation. In the case of the

<sup>(4)</sup> Mill (1861), *Considerations on Representative Government*, chap. 3. (Note: His attitude is in conflict with the sentiments of Wurster, cited in footnote (1) to this chapter.)

'Sense' of representation	
DESCRIPTIVE	'Identikit' Sample or specimen of the group being represented
SYMBOLIC	'Spiritual embodiment' Fervent sympathiser
ASCRIPTIVE	Accredited agent (an elitist decision-maker)
REPRESENTATION OF INTERESTS	Advocate Prosecutor of <u>particular</u> interests

Fig. 2.1. 'Senses of representation'.

first type, the 'purest' form of representation, the representatives are most frequently involved in the decision-making and plan-making *on their own account*, articulating their own views, or those of fellow citizens in similar situations. The involvement of residents in demonstrations, in marches, where the central concern is a threat to their residence, or to their standards of environment, are typical cases in which descriptive representation is most easily identified. The process of power-sharing in the formulation of policies and plans is ideally satisfied in these 'one view—one articulant' situations; but, just as the notions of classical democracy are idyllic and impracticable in modern mass society, so the concept of descriptive representation in its purest form is an impossibility. This generates the requirement of an election from within the group of a spokesman, competent and articulate to pursue the necessary negotiations, but as precisely an 'identikit' specimen as it is possible to identify. The second of these forms, symbolic representation, is that in which a spokesman is nominated from within the group because of his ability to exhibit the fervour, spirit, conventions and political appetite of the group with which he is identified. This is the form assumed by the interest-sympathy groups, typically concerned with matters of environment, national (natural and built environment) heritage, conservation, and so on. Another manifestation of this form is the promotional activities of community radicals on behalf of threatened

disadvantaged community groups lacking the competence to organise for self-protection. The advocacy activities of young planners in their own time would pass for examples of this form of representation where the representative need not be of the dominant cultural group whose views need advancing.

A third form of representation may be identified as that in which accredited agents assume (or are directly given) the responsibility for taking decisions, largely on the basis of their specialist skills and knowledge. This *ascriptive representation* is one in which the 'client' is bound by decisions taken for him, and on his behalf, by an 'advisor' or advocate. The most simple example is the legal one, in which, upon appointing a courtroom 'spokesman', the client suffers or enjoys the consequences of the representation, and is bound by whatever judgements are handed down, and by whatever course of action the advocate pursues. In the planning context, there are four possible expressions of this form of representation. Firstly, and most obviously, there is the case in which an interest or group retains a planning consultant to argue its case at one of the various forms of statutory public inquiry on the occasion of an appeal against a preceding decision from a planning authority, or on the occasion of an objection to a promulgated planning proposal. Secondly, there is the case of the resident's group, or similar interest group, which has access to funds to have its case properly presented, either in a defensive exercise (i.e. at an appeal or objection inquiry) or in a promotional campaign to engender activity to make plans for an area where none exists or where an existing plan has become irrelevant because of changed conditions. Thirdly, there is the emerging case of 'planning aid' in which expertise is made available to those members of the community whose financial status would otherwise preclude efficient representation of their case.<sup>(5)</sup> Fourthly, the charette process of decision-making (see pp. 301-4) requires the eventual presentation of the community-generated planning proposals to the 'central' city planning authority.

The final identifiable form is described as *representation of interests*, and is in operation particularly in institutionalised decision-making

<sup>(5)</sup> There is a growing literature on 'planning aid'. For example, see *Planning Aid*, RTPI, London (1974).

situations in which a 'general' representative prosecutes particular interests. For example, a member of parliament will have been elected by a general electorate within a particular constituency, and may be expected to act in the 'best' interests of that electorate; this responsibility does not, however, hinder the representative's concern with particular interests as causes célèbres, such as trade unionism, consumer affairs, mental health, preservation of historic buildings, homosexuality, or the banishment of the monarchy. Thus, the representative operates on two levels—one, a general level with community responsibilities, the other, a perhaps personalised area of interest, or one derived from those interests which sponsored his candidature. There is no direct equivalent case in the context of urban and regional planning.

In practice, Griffiths' four forms are not mutually exclusive. It should be noted that it is the communication and respect gap that develops between representative and the represented that generates the demand for improved and different means of decision-making. The challenge to planning from the representational forms described lies in the need to fully operationalise the opportunities for participation that exist in most planning systems, and particularly those which facilitate involvement of the citizen; and the challenge may be extended to the development of meaningful dialogue techniques which are appropriate to the representational form (see Chapter 7). These are the two key requirements to emerge from the consideration of Griffiths' question, 'how can one person represent another?'; careful selection by both the planned-for and the planners of the most suitable means of representation is necessary because "political judgements are not entirely technical . . . judgements of what a man's interests are, are not purely factual, but are value judgements . . ."<sup>(6)</sup>

In a complementary discussion to Griffiths' there is a distinction drawn between the usefulness of the descriptive and symbolic representational forms for assemblies which are essentially deliberative, and the prerequisites for ascriptive representation in assemblies that are principally legislative (Wollheim, 1960). This has been carried further by many political commentators to the point at which repre-

<sup>(6)</sup> Griffiths (1960), p. 206.

sensation of every interest on the basis of one interest to one 'articulant' (Mill's term) becomes impractical because of the disproportionate weighting given to minority interests. In this situation the leadership function of the representative's role becomes particularly important (Pennock, 1968); the representative has a responsibility to form and re-form public opinion, and to build consensus from the tense range of heterogeneous interests, values and aspirations of those being represented. Practice in many parts of the world is providing evidence of the need, and the success of looking beyond the traditional institutionalised processes and vehicles for representation, towards a range of supplementary devices designed to be better able to accommodate a meaningful and usable expression of public views.

*Representation—as a Metaphysical Concept*

Effective political judgements are rarely technical, rarely comprehensively objective, and most frequently exercised in the protection of some interests rather than all public interests. On the other hand, this failure to achieve total satisfaction of all relevant interests is unlikely to be mitigated by resort to more scientific means. This situation generates two onerous responsibilities for the representative: firstly, it requires the discharge of high levels of conscious efficiency, and secondly it requires the invocation of final arbitration through the expression of public opinion. "If... we regard the political situation as a conversation, or at least an attempt at one, in which people give reasons for saying one thing rather than another ought to be done, which can be given impartial consideration despite differences in the material interests of those involved in the discussion..." there is a clear case of demand for responsible representation, perhaps in the ascriptive mould described by Griffiths.<sup>(7)</sup> The whole matter is rendered more complex by any attempt to scientifically apply the notions pertinent to deliberative (representative) assemblies and those which are clearly legislative (and still representative). Perhaps the less tangible, psychosocial dimensions of Pitkin's

<sup>(7)</sup> Griffiths (1960), p. 208.

(1967) analysis are of help. The keys to effective mass participation—which, because of the numbers potentially involved, must be constrained in some way—are possibly cognisance issues. For example, it may be suggested that “a man is represented if he feels that he is, and not if he does not.”<sup>(8)</sup> The translation of this sentiment is of considerable difficulty, having both positive and negative elements: participation in decision-making derived from a genuine desire for active involvement is laudable, and is obviously a positive approach to the issue of representation—it is a plus factor to the decision-making system. However, the requirement for an extended participation base derived from a manifest dissatisfaction with prevailing representational forms, either from a feeling of being inadequately represented or even not represented at all, is clearly a negative approach—it is essentially an attempt to restore a voice in the decision-making forum. Pitkin is inclined to the interpretation that the movements for the wider base of participation are derived from the negative perspective, which to some extent questions the suitability of the clear preference for ascriptive representation expressed by Griffith. However, in order to maintain a balance in this review of representation attention is now given to the four forms identified by Pitkin—formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, ‘acting for others’.

The *formalistic* form may be distinguished by the unreserved transmission of the decision-making functions from the represented to the representative, from which it follows that there is an unquestioning acceptance of decision outcomes. This form requires the public to divest itself of any dynamic role, and to convey authorisation to act; this, however, generates its own prerequisite of a clear prescription of the parameters of the ‘authorisation to act.’ There is, therefore, no infinite scope to the decision-making capability of the representative, rather the responsibility is temporarily delegated. In the context of urban and regional planning this restrictionist interpretation of representation would seem to place too severe a strain on the process of decision-making and upon the relationship of the parties joined by the form, because, if the public (generally) is disadvantaged on technical matters in the dialogue between the planners and the planned, it is unlikely that a representative whose field of action

<sup>(8)</sup> Pitkin (1967), p. 9.



is circumscribed from a basis of relative incompetence can make a meaningful contribution from anyone's interest. Although Pitkin argues her case on the basis of the concept of *organschaft*,<sup>(9)</sup> and of the particular viewpoints of Plamenatz and Voegelin,<sup>(10)</sup> she concedes that Burke and Friedrich, among others, have identified a sub-type which involved less of a brief for action, and more public-accountability and reasoning for the action taken by the representative.<sup>(11)</sup> The concept is sufficiently well argued to neutralise the notion that public participation may be effected by the use of 'delegates' from the public or from particular groups.

In contrast, *descriptive* representation is of the 'identikit' variety. This simple, 'pure', representational form has little relevance to modern mass society, although its part in the argument for proportional representation, i.e. a numerical population data base, is telling (Friedrich, 1950). In attempts to sharpen the definition of this form resort has been made to alternative adjectives such as 'typical' (Carr *et al.*, 1959), and to the advocacy of *ad hoc* decision-making bodies whose membership might have attracted popular elective support (Eulau, 1959). However, the usefulness of this form as a starting point for meaningful citizen participation has been prejudiced by the serious conceptual and practical reservations expressed about it. At a more metaphysical level, the concept of *symbolic* representation may be challenged as being inappropriate for people-substitution purposes. There can be little exception to the norm of symbolic representation attributed to, e.g. coats-of-arms, flags, national anthems; in addition there are the mystical contexts of cult, primitive magic, ritual, which are not without their counterparts in some aspects of the plan-making process or agencies. Yet, as Pitkin points out, the usefulness of the metaphor of symbolism is prejudiced by the emotional, affective, sometimes irrational and highly psychological responses frequently associated with decision-making, both in general

<sup>(9)</sup> See, for example, Wolff (1934), *Organschaft und juristische Person: Vol. II, Theorie der Ververtretung* (Berlin, Carl Heymanus).

<sup>(10)</sup> Plamenatz (1938), *Consent, Freedom and Political Obligation* (London, OUP); Voegelin (1952), *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago, Univ. Chicago Press).

<sup>(11)</sup> "Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion". Burke, *Speech to the Electors of Bristol*, 3 November 1774.

and with planning in particular. "*Repraesentare* means to make present something that is not in fact present";<sup>(12)</sup> it is thus difficult to perceive situations in which symbolic representation can be adequate for the purposes of the proper conduct of a decision-making dialogue.

It has been claimed that the real test of representation is not achievement through the ballot box, but the degree of success in the furtherance of the objectives of the represented (Leiserson, 1949). Pitkin pursues this line of argument, considering the performance measures for the various agent descriptions that are possible. Perhaps Diggs (1968) has accurately assessed the need for, and public acceptance of representation, albeit reluctantly and without enthusiasm; he has suggested the public accepts resort to representatives because it is unable to be in two places at the same time, and because it cannot profess expertise in all matters. As the pursuit of its welfare requires both, each member of the public needs help, and "representation provides one form."<sup>(13)</sup> Burke's looser description of representation, i.e. a role unfettered by instructions from a client group, and determined more by the exercise of judgement and discretion, has contributed to the present state of disaffection with the traditional representational forms. Pitkin suggests some form of control over the representative, i.e. to ensure his actions are guided by the interests of those he represents, is inevitable. The medical analogy of a prescription that is transiently unpalatable but in the continuing interests of the patient is apposite; this has been described as the physician acting out the real will of the patient to get well.<sup>(14)</sup> This analogy has exciting possibilities for the planner; his prescription has similar unpalatable implications, yet it is drawn in the 'best interests' of his client (group); his recommended course of action is most often apolitical and therefore a meaningful contribution to problem-solving and, by association, to decision-making; his diagnosis is technical and his prognosis is technical. Why, therefore, is the planner so seldom taken as seriously as the physician? Is it still a matter of professional mystique? The planner is patently failing to adequately rep-

<sup>(12)</sup> Friedrich (1950), p. 267.

<sup>(13)</sup> Diggs (1968), p. 31.

<sup>(14)</sup> Coker and Rodee (1935), 'Representation', *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, XIII, p. 312.

resent his own interests, and with it, the interests of the public. There is patently a significant role failure somewhere in the decision-making process; whether it is of organisational or metaphysical origin is conjectural.

In the discussion so far, two alternative solutions have been advocated, each of which creates (or reflects) a particular style of representation and can be discharged by a particular type of representative; for Griffiths, the style is personified by the ascriptive representative acting according to the behavioural standards of Burke; for Pitkin, the style is constrained by prescriptions for action set by the represented public. For both, the operational and guiding context is political. It may be argued, however, that the most meaningful form of representation is that derived from a perceptive and proficient bureaucracy.

*Representation—as a Function of the Bureaucracy*

In Weber's ideal type of political system, the bureaucracy is presented as functioning internally in a manner that is essentially politically neutral.<sup>(15)</sup> Yet, in the real world, the possibility of a totally neutral bureaucracy is negligible; it has been considered, for example, that bureaucracies are important political actors relying upon specific ideologies and concepts such as 'public participation' and 'the public interest' in order to achieve their aims. (Krause, 1968). Further, it has been observed that bureaucracies tend to resemble and behave like pressure groups (Freeman, 1958; La Palambara, 1963), by administering statutory provision whilst attempting to influence public opinion. Rabinovitz (1968) has described such mobilisation roles open to the planner in certain governmental situations.

In spite of the claims of impartiality of the bureaucracy, frequently identified with assertions of the prosecution of the public interest, it may be observed that bureaucracies can be seen to operate in a way that is differentially favourable, advancing the interests of selected groups at the expense of others (Huntington, 1951). This practice has been described as 'clientalism', and its effects include

<sup>(15)</sup> Weber (1946), 'Bureaucracy', in Gerth and Wright Mills, *From Max Weber*, OUP, New York, pp. 196–8.

the emergence of an élite client bloc, the use of public power for private ends, the inevitable development of groups with incompatible aspirations leading to the manipulation of regulations, and the transformation of the administration into a stronghold of minority groups.<sup>(16)</sup> The result is tantamount to political partisanship by the bureaucracy, a representation of particular interests, which is accommodated by the prosecution of such ill-defined concepts as 'the public interest' (see later). Presumably, the bureaucracy has no legal mandate to engage in direct community action; however, bureaucrats closest to the action end of the decision-making continuum will inevitably become political actors, if only in discharging the function of 'meeting the people'. Banfield, Wilson and others, have described bureaucracies at local levels of government as 'power blocs', referring particularly to their manipulative ability to hinder or assist changes in the social system.<sup>(17)</sup> Certainly, case studies in the American context have largely supplanted the simple community power model defined by Hunter (1953), replacing it with more complex descriptions of decision-making structures in which the bureaucracy plays a significant representational role in the control, direction and exchange of community resources, obligations and decisions (Long, 1958; Agger *et al.*, 1964). The notion that in all action bureaucracies are responsible to elected officials, councils (elected legislatures) and thus to the electorate, has been exposed as naive in Boyer's (1964) description of the manipulations and variations in interpretation by the bureaucracies. However, as the bureaucracy becomes involved in the 'action' end of the decision continuum it has tended to increasingly seek the legitimation of its role: "It is these socio-political factors which lead the 'action bureaucracy' to develop ideologies to increase the acceptability of their actions to the influenced public. One of the most important of these new bureaucratic ideologies is 'citizen participation'.<sup>(18)</sup> There is a danger that bureaucratically motivated, directed and executed strategies of citizen participation—i.e. where the requirement for the process has come from neither the politicians nor the public—may degenerate into a perverted form of democracy,

<sup>(16)</sup> Huntington (1951), p. 377.

<sup>(17)</sup> Banfield and Wilson (1963); Banfield (1961); Wilson (1963).

<sup>(18)</sup> Krause (1968), p. 136.

particularly if the invitation to participate is not widely accepted. The resulting vacuum is likely to be filled by a bureaucratic élite with a license (given by default of opposition) to advance the interests of its preferred client groups (Thoenes, 1966), to direct the outcome of policies (Hayek, 1944), and to lead the community towards end-states it has not participated in shaping (Bell, 1960). The concept of citizen participation has been increasingly used by certain action-oriented bureaucracies in an ideological manner, that is, as a philosophical means to achieve social change; in so doing, the extent to which they are acting as agents, or representatives, of those sections of the public wanting change (or not wanting change) deserves careful scrutiny.

Niskanen's (1971) development of a theory of the behaviour of the bureaucracy emerged from a personal realisation, through experience, that "there is nothing inherent in the nature of bureaux and our political institutions that leads public officials to know, seek out, or act in the public interest."<sup>(19)</sup> His research has been directed at determining to what public officials respond, and how decision-making processes and institutions may be changed to render their behaviour more consistent with the public interest. There is a tenable argument that bureaucrats are not so much guardians and prosecutors of the public conscience and interest (derived from their professional codes), as "representatives of the elected executive",<sup>(20)</sup> and therefore political actors on a particular dimension, accountable and responsive to the public only by way of a circuitous and tenuous route, most directly through the elected branch of the decision-making structure. Most of the literature on bureaucracies represents the bureaucrat either as an automaton or as maximising some concept of general welfare;<sup>(21)</sup> however, many bureaucrats, at most levels in the hierarchy, are seldom entirely motivated by conceptions of general welfare. The bureaucrat's role, and particularly his motivations, are probably incapable of precise definition; there is certainly no pres-

<sup>(19)</sup> Niskanen (1971), p. vi.

<sup>(20)</sup> Niskanen (1971), p. 22.

<sup>(21)</sup> "... they clothed all men in the government service with the gloriole of altruistic self-sacrifice." von Mises (1944), *Bureaucracy*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, p. 78.

cription in the form of statute or ordinance that requires a bureaucrat to know, or seek out, or even to act in the public interest,<sup>(22)</sup> although traditionally it is widely believed that through the processes of societal selection, public officers are trained and given the power to act in what they come to believe is in the public interest.<sup>(23)</sup>

The case for an impartial bureaucracy, to temper decision-making with neutral values is strong, and is the traditional line of argument. The extent to which the bureaucracy can effectively represent the complex totality of aspirations associated with the public interest is conjectural; in so far as the bureaucrat should be politically neutral, his representational role is circumscribed by the requirement to attend to cold calculation. However, in situations where the politicians adopt a neutral position, it is possibly the responsibility of the bureaucrat to assume an active and partisan role (Rabinovitz, 1968). This is certainly true in the multifaceted arena of decision-making in urban and regional planning. There is, therefore, some confusion on the identity of the leaders who can speak for the community.

#### *Representation—as Community Leadership*

The identification of community leadership has continuously exercised political scientists, and the available literature is generally inconclusive both as to the methods used and the general applicability of the results of particular case studies. This is unfortunate, because the need to identify community leaders is critical for everyone involved in community action; it is vital for elected members and for the bureaucracy to have key reference points in the community which can be turned to for guidance and expressions of opinions and attitudes at 'grass roots' level. There is argument that the community leaders are the élite, the office holders in the various organisations that are active in the development and welfare of the community, the foci of pressures exerted on local government in the pursuit of particular interests (Mills, 1956; Domhoff, 1967). Alternatively, there is argument that for accurate expressions of 'grass roots' aspirations

<sup>(22)</sup> Niskanen (1971), p. 193.

<sup>(23)</sup> See, for example, Bundy (1968), *The Strength of Government*, Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press.

and opinions there is no substitute for soliciting individual responses from the citizens.

A study by Fiedler and others (1971), attempted to determine the location of community leadership. The point of departure for the study was the belief that while most politicians and office holders in community organisations claim (in good faith) to know the temper of the community and its problems, there is evidence to suggest these claims are not wholly accurate. The findings of the study substantiate the fear that a communication gap exists between the public, local government, and between the community and its reputed leaders. There is evidence that residents feel that problems of major concern to them either are not explicitly voiced or that their concerns are not adequately followed through with action. However, it is important to remember that the activities and concerns of reputed community leaders are usually specific, whereas those of the wider community are obviously of a broader perspective. It is inevitable that as individuals the leaders will share some of the broader concerns and aspirations of the community, but their particular interests associated with the organisations of which they are part seem to neutralise the wider spectrum of community concerns. Fiedler has expressed the danger of confusing the concepts of 'the élite' with those of 'community leaders';<sup>(24)</sup> the two are not necessarily the same, and there is empirical evidence to suggest that the focus of community interest representation is diffuse.

For urban and regional planning there is a paramount need *in certain situations* and *at certain points* in the planning process for the community feeling to be expressed. Without a clear understanding of who speaks for the community there is no other possible course of action than to secure that feeling by means of mass participation strategies. As has been argued previously, mass involvement in decision-making generally is impossible because of the logistical problem; such widespread involvement in planning will almost inevitably result in emotive fragmentation and polarisation of interests without a means available to attain a generally sound consensus. Thus, there is pressure to define the location of community leader-

<sup>(24)</sup> Fiedler (1971), p. 332.

ship, and to treat with that on the understanding that such leaders are the vehicle for the two-way flow of information and policy guidance. In this respect, the confused state of the art in political science presents a formidable stumbling block to the progress of the participation movement in planning, resulting in resort either to unpredictable mass involvement procedures with their confusion of expressions, or to the selection of particular interests for consultation with the attendant possibilities of an inaccurate assessment of the range of interests consulted and the lack of general applicability of the sentiments expressed by those interests.

In planning, as in most if not all other areas of social welfare conducted within an institutionalised process, policies should be coherent, compatible and consistent. This is in stark contrast with the composition of the public sympathies, which are almost without exception incoherent, incompatible one with another, and of variable consistency; there are many mutually inconsistent opinions of different interest groups, and a mass of largely disinterested persons. In addition, from these two groups emerge in random fashion a changing diversity of interests, aspirations, demands, opinions. In this confused situation it is difficult to see where precision may be attached to the mandate of the representative, however he or she may have been revealed. This complex character of the decision-making process inclines to support the contention that 'representation' is itself an unbridled, sensitive, manipulative process rather than a rigid, formalised structure with the trappings of status and power (Sobolewski, 1968; Lipset, 1960). It has been argued that representation is a system of actions "to facilitate interchange between authority and the spontaneous groupings of society".<sup>(25)</sup> The process of interchange, of interaction will necessarily be composed of highly differentiated forms, some of which will be structured, organised and expected—these are the institutionalised forms of elections, press campaigns, action of pressure groups, petitions, and so on—and some of which will be innovative and spontaneous causing momentary disruption and delay. "Every form is equally legitimate from the standpoint of representation, and no single one is by itself sufficient to achieve the aims

<sup>(25)</sup> Lipset (1960), p. 51.



of the process of representation."<sup>(26)</sup> The outcome of the interactions is a consensus, or an amicable similarity between the propositions of the planning agency and the attitudes of the interested parties; it is unlikely that a closer proximity to mass support than this can be achieved—"no more is needed than the similarity of basic attitudes and shared values."<sup>(27)</sup>

Thus, representation may be construed as an operational form (Griffiths), a series of metaphysical concepts (Pitkin), an organisational ploy (Niskanen), or a process of mutual interaction (Sobolewski). For strategies of citizen participation in planning to be meaningful it is critical that there is a clear understanding of what is expected of the prevailing or desired representational form, and of its intrinsic qualities. It is unlikely that any form will yield a concordance of views from the multiplicity of relevant interests; there may be doubts that there exists 'a public interest' or 'a general will'. The degree of consensus, or similarity will vary in time, on different planning issues, and in relation to different interest groups. What is required, therefore, is the establishment of a meaningful process to accommodate the various desired interactions, the opening of all possible means by which to 'hear' the attitudes, opinions and aspirations of those for whom the planning is being done; the precise mode of meaningful representation will be dictated by the circumstances of the situation requiring resolution and decision.

#### THE PUBLIC INTEREST

In his appraisal of the spirit of Liberalism, Lippmann (1925) identified a weakness in the logic of many political philosophies, *viz.* a misunderstanding of the nature of the public to which they make an appeal. The public that becomes involved in any political situation is only a proportion of the total, and particularly that number which considers its interests to be at risk; it is therefore inappropriate to assume that "all mankind (is) within hearing, that all mankind when it (hears) would respond homogeneously because it (has) a single

<sup>(26)</sup> Sobolewski (1968), p. 106.

<sup>(27)</sup> Sobolewski (1968), p. 107.

soul."<sup>(28)</sup> It is unfortunate for the decision-makers, and for those on whose behalf decisions are made in the arenas of political action and public policy, that there is no general agreement as to what is meant by 'the public interest'. The continuing debate and inquiry into the concept and its operational ramifications serves only to perpetuate the confusion. For examples of the confusion, and the occasional statements of disenchantment with the term and its conceptual basis, four prominent political scientists have commented:

- (a) the public interest "is usually left totally undefined. Rarely can it be read to mean the preferences of the greater number. Often enough a precise examination would show that it can mean nothing more than whatever happens to be the speaker's own view as to a desirable public policy."<sup>(29)</sup>
- (b) the concept of the public interest "makes no operational sense, notwithstanding the efforts of a generation of capable scholars... political scientists might better spend their time nurturing concepts that offer greater promise of becoming useful tools in the scientific study of political responsibility."<sup>(30)</sup>
- (c) "perhaps the academicians ought to take the lead in drawing up a list of ambiguous words and phrases 'which would never be missed'. For such a list I would have several candidates, but it should suffice here to nominate 'the public interest'."<sup>(31)</sup>

The lack of continuity and consistency in the investigations into the concept (Schubert, 1960) has contributed to the perpetuation of its elusiveness, and the periodic passing of it from fashion. Two recent reviews on conceptual influences in the decision-making environment in planning have remarked on these two matters (Friedmann, 1973; Kitchen, 1974). There is evidence in much of the literature on this subject, that the term is admirably flexible, affording most participants to a particular situation a measure of identification with it, and facilitating a desirable manoeuvring space for the decision-

<sup>(28)</sup> Lippman (1925), p. 168. (Note: in the citation, the tense has been changed.)

<sup>(29)</sup> Dahl and Lindblom (1963), p. 501.

<sup>(30)</sup> Schubert (1960), p. 224.

<sup>(31)</sup> Sorauf (1957), p. 190.

makers. However, Plamenatz (1954) has argued that flexibility is not a desirable feature in the concept of the public interest: there is an inescapable need for precision in the determination of the interests if fundamental and specific policies are to be designed to accommodate identified interests. This is a very political dimension of the matter.

This dilemma of imprecision has infiltrated the practices of urban and regional planning; the concept is cited as legitimation and justification by planners whose *de facto* position in plan-making has no democratic basis of political power nor popular support. Thus, in planning, but perhaps not exclusively in planning, 'the public interest' has been conceived as a supra-political norm. Gans (1973) has suggested that the prime use of the concept at the present state of the planning art is as a heuristic tool upon which political advocacy and action may be based. It may be presumed that even Lippman's 'disenchanted man' would concede the usefulness of the concept, or that a 'public interest' exists. However, empirical evidence tends to support the contention of Dahl and Lindblom (1963), that the concept is propagated as a political tactic, thus contributing to the inevitable process of disputation when it is used to justify action that puts particular interests at risk. In the real world, away from the phantasies and theories of political science, the public interest (translated into goals) that is most often pursued may be identified either with organised minority interests, or with organised majority expressions through the ballot box; in neither situation does the unorganised proportion of society, whether a minority or a majority, figure significantly in the conventional decision-making process. Gans (1969), and others, have argued that in a democracy, there is a clear need to achieve an equitable balance between minority and majority interests. More recently Gans (1973) has argued that planners will need to have a belief in the public interest if they hope to rationally justify their concepts, proposals and actions, even if they are aware that their use of the concept is sometimes emotional and at other times intellectual; the need for a spiritual understanding of the concept is patently necessary if the planner is to graciously accept the adulteration of his cherished preferences by the actions of the other contributors to the decision-making process.

In spite of the problems of definition and interpretation, to which only brief attention is addressed below, there must be concern that, if the concept is so subject to the vagaries of fashion (as Friedmann suggests), and if it is so vast as to attract ambiguity (as Cassinelli (1958) suggests), the continuing nature or purpose of the exercise of urban and regional planning becomes the subject of serious question.<sup>(32)</sup> Friedmann has discussed his idea that citizen participation in planning is a means to achieving the comprehensive expression of the public interest, and that the current enthusiasm for expressions outside the conventional democratic fora and procedures are manifestations of societal adjustments to achieve the balanced comprehensiveness. His ideas are not shared unreservedly; Nisbet (1973) challenges the centralism which forms an integral part of the public philosophy thesis, and Gans disputes the ability of mass society to accept the required disciplines of egalitarianism. Thus, the dilemma seems intractable. Further confusion has been exposed in the planning dimensions of the concept by the polarised interpretations of the purpose of planning of Needham (1971) and Faludi (1971); the resolution of the problem-solving versus goals-achieving approach to planning as a difference in interpretation of the public interest has not yet contributed to a clarification of the issue (Needham and Faludi, 1973).

In the hope that some clarification of the concept for the purposes of urban and regional planning is possible, an attempt is made in this section to explore the public interest from three viewpoints. Firstly, there is a brief perambulation through the maze of conceptual descriptions and definitions, relying heavily on the vast literary output of political science which occurred during the 1950's and 1960's; secondly, there is an attempt to discern an operational definition of the concept from relevant law; and thirdly, the debate concerning public and private interests will be reviewed. From this base, a summary attempt is made to 'locate' the philosophy and practice of citizen participation in respect of the clarification of the concept that is achieved.

<sup>(32)</sup> Friedmann (1973) has argued that "the idea of the public interest cannot be discarded except at a grave risk to the community and ourselves (i.e. planners)" (p. 21).

*'The Conceptual Muddle'*<sup>(33)</sup>

The concept certainly enjoys a confusion of descriptions, interpretations, translations, and usages. Sorauf (1967) has attempted a clarification of the matter by identifying a possible common denominator: his proposition is that, of the statements he has researched, the public interest may be construed as a criterion or desideratum by which the relevance of public policies may be measured, or as goals which those policies ideally pursue and attain. Beyond this core of common factors, the concept has become manipulated by its use in association with descriptions of administrative behaviour, superior notions of wisdom, electoral consensus, amalgams of compatible interests, political compromise, and so on. These uses of the concept as a closed system of functional requirements for political decision-making tend to ignore its intrinsic value as a purpose for action (Sorauf, 1957; Leys and Perry, 1959), and as a fictional device for the ordering of human affairs.<sup>(34)</sup> A review of the literature does little to answer the question whether the public interest is a political phantom or a discernible guiding principle for decision-making: recourse to the discussions of democracy fail to resolve the dilemma of what to do about competing yet individually legitimate interests, and the concept of the public interest seems to deny the pursuit of the democratic axiom that each man is the best judge (and therefore the best advocate) of his own interests.

The liberal, and often undefined, use of the concept trespasses into related issues, adding further confusion to other concepts which contribute to the umbrella of democracy; for example, usage of the term carries assumptions about the nature and organisation of political interests, the responsibilities (and responsiveness) of elected representatives, the process of public policymaking, and so on. Of these, perhaps the accountability of elected representatives has exercised most thought; is the accountability to (a) the wishes and mandate of his constituents, or to (b) the manifesto drawn up by his political party, or to (c) his personalised vision of the good society? Within each of these areas, there may be legitimate assertions of working towards

<sup>(33)</sup> Sorauf (1962), p. 183.

<sup>(34)</sup> Gray, cited in Sorauf (1962), p. 185.

'the public interest'. It is in this political arena that the inherent flexibility of the concept (because of its imprecision) may be used for the advantage of the particular context and situation. In the activities of urban and regional planning, the imprecision has facilitated its use to legitimise bureaucratic or political preferences of planning strategies, of development or change of use decisions, of programming or phasing decisions, and to justify the inequities in the effect of planning proposals (e.g. costs to the few, benefits to the many). Such rationalisations contribute to the reduction of political debate to the most primitive level (Sorauf, 1962); and the tendency to extend the reasoning for decisions to high and broad levels of abstraction contributes significantly to the exclusion from the debate those for whom the interest is pursued (Leys and Perry, 1959).

Probes into the concept have exercised a number of researchers over prolonged periods, the analyses differing either from the initial viewpoints or the purpose for which the investigation took place.<sup>135</sup> From this body of literature, there comes a realisation (and, incidentally, a justification for continuing research) that the prevailing lack of models descriptive of behaviour in decision-making is a handicap for the consideration of matters central to the theme of this book. Without an adequate theory base (derived from theory, or from empirical evidence deductively) it is possible to deny the requirement that public servants subjugate their professional preferences, and be subservient to the public interest. Schubert (1957, 1960, 1962), has made many attempts to translate his threefold classification of administrative behaviour—rationalist, idealist, realist—to operational contexts in which 'the public interest' is cited as a guiding principle. The rationalist behaviour theory is of limited relevance or help, because of its concentration on the faithful execution of decisions made at a 'higher' level, so that it ignores the possibility of confrontation by conflicting demands expressed by articulate and organised groups (of interests). Of detriment to the present discussion at least,

<sup>135</sup> For example: in relation to public administration, Schubert (1957); in relation to political parties, Schattschneider (1952); in relation to the judicial process, Schubert (1958), Cohen (1962); political theory, Sorauf (1957), Schubert (1958), Cassinelli (1958). The classic early works on the subject are Dewey (1927), Beard (1934), Herring (1936).

is the insistence of rationalist theory that political behaviour does not accommodate political choice. Schubert has drawn the analogy with a sausage machine: "the public will" is inserted at one end, and from the other end emerge "neat little segments of the public interest." Idealist theory has little which is constructive to offer by way of clarification of the public interest, or even by what means it may be determined; instead, the theory imbues the decision-maker with the responsibility for determining what that interest might be, drawing upon his experience of comparable situations, prior political socialisation, and ethical preconditioning. It may be suggested that the concept of a public interest is irrelevant to idealist theory, as the essence of decision-making to this theory is in accord with personal perceptions and abstractions concerned with 'good', rather than with external guidelines. Schubert has remarked that the personalised and abstract guidelines are similar to those of the elusive public interest in so far as they are devoid of predictable context.<sup>(36)</sup> The realist theory approaches the real world dilemma most closely, in that it acknowledges the difficulty of conflict resolution stemming from competing interests; but there remains a distinct gap between the aspirations of problem-solving, and the disjointed operations of the real world. Perhaps in desperation, it may be conceded that the prosecution of 'the public interest' fulfils only two functions, neither of which are based on a thorough understanding nor on evidence; these two functions are (a) the 'hair shirt' function referred to by Sorauf; and (b) the convenience function of the particular compromise pertinent to a current issue for which there appears to be a popular consensus (or aspiration).

The route to a clarification of the concept is littered with theoretical formulations; two particularly significant attributions of the public interest are in respect of quantitative determination and determination by governmental fiat.

Further consideration will be given to the first of these matters below, but it is appropriate at this point in the discussion to note that the Benthamite approach to the public interest is that the concept is simply a matter of summing the individual interests in the

<sup>(36)</sup> Schubert (1962), p. 174.

community in a mechanical fashion; to Bentham, the community is identical with "the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it."<sup>(37)</sup> This identification of the public interest with the arithmetically derived total of individual interests overlooks a number of serious contributory matters which tend to invalidate the thesis. For example, it ignores the possibility of antagonism between the individual interests, or, if it recognises that possibility, it assumes that a summation of antagonisms contributes to a satisfactory (i.e. positive) consensus.

Bodenheimer (1962) has remarked that the quantitative argument is concerned with aggregates of individual interests, rather than with particularised instances of those interests, but he points out that without a qualitative evaluation of individual interests a proper determination of the public interest would almost certainly encounter serious philosophical and operational difficulties. Another aspect of this matter which is often not given due weight, is the confusing and often contradictory psychological structure of human beings; for example, a member of the public may at one time approach matters anthropocentrically, interpreting them from an isolationist viewpoint, and at other times evaluate matters responsibly as of concern to all citizens. The balance of these conflicting tendencies is rarely stable in an individual, and certainly varies between individual members of the public. Thirdly, the qualitative argument ignores the contentious dimension of the means whereby the range of interests can be accurately ascertained as the prerequisite to the summation exercise. The problems associated with the quantitative determination of the public interest are not easily resolved (even) by the proper discharge of representational functions.

It is similarly inappropriate to identify strictly the public interest with the policy decisions of government and public authorities; "it cannot be conceded that the public interest consists in whatever the public authorities by their fiat declare it to be."<sup>(38)</sup> In addition, there are universal assumptions about the behaviour and competence of public servants that render irrational the simple identification of pub-

<sup>(37)</sup> Bentham (1823). *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. 1, p. iv.

<sup>(38)</sup> Bodenheimer (1962), p. 209.



lic authority action with the public interest.<sup>(39)</sup> It is equally naive to equate the public good with the interest of a mystical collective organism, such as a sovereign, or president. In the same vane, it is invalid to assume that the public interest is necessarily prosecuted or protected by the cumulative content of statutory enactments flowing from the actions of elected representatives. A celebrated decision from a United States court incorporates the statement that "before any commission can decide whether a contract is contrary to the public interest, it is necessary to find what is, or what is not in the public interest. The power to make such determination rests with the legislature and without such declaration the commission would be without a standard or criterion."<sup>(40)</sup> There is cause for concern if the implication of this decision is that the only means of determining the meaning of the concept is by the enactment of legislation (or by a definition of the public interest in each piece of legislation).

Friedrich (1950) has applied the classic interpretation of John Stuart Mill that knowledge verified by reason constitutes a substantial hypothesis to the matter of representation and the public interest, by inferring that the public interest should be conceived as the genuine interest of the whole community and not the camouflaged interest of an élite or minority. This, and similar interpretations (Bodenheimer, 1962) falter on the definition of the operational qualitative and quantitative yardsticks. Of little help in this matter are the abstract statements of the philosophers, who suggest that the greatest human happiness is derived from making unspecified contributions to society in the material, intellectual, ethical and religious, and aesthetic spheres of life, in addition, that is, to the satisfaction of animal instincts.<sup>(41)</sup> In support of this contention, Bodenheimer suggests that "all measures which promote, serve and benefit the human desire for affirmative and constructive participation in the enterprise of civilisation must be deemed to be in the public interest because they increase the good of all as it is intelligently con-

<sup>(39)</sup> Bodenheimer (1962), "These facts are so well understood that no elaborate documentation or historical verification would appear to be necessary" (p. 209).

<sup>(40)</sup> U.S. Supreme Court of Pennsylvania: *Bell Telephone Co. v. Driscoll* 1941. 21 A.2d 912, at para. 916.

<sup>(41)</sup> For example, see Fromm (1955), *The Sane Society*.

ceived."<sup>(42)</sup> The dilemma is perpetuated, however, by the realisation that there is possibly no society in which the notion of the public interest connotes all human aspirations, demands or claims as being of equal entitlement to satisfaction. However, there is a measure of coincidence in the views that permits a meaningful degree of overlap and therefore congruence: the widest and most effective degree of coincidence occurs in the general state of preference on the part of each member of the public that a state of affairs is caused to exist in which each individual has the opportunity to develop his particular aptitudes and abilities in a manner that is of benefit to all the members of society. Lippmann has described it thus: "The public interest may be presumed to be what men in the end would choose if they saw clearly, thought rationally, acted disinterestedly and benevolently."<sup>(43)</sup>

The very volume of the literature devoted to an examination of the public interest concept, and the regrettable lack of useful consensus leaves those concerned to delve into its philosophical and practical dimensions "somehow wildly kicking about for a footing in mid-air"<sup>(44)</sup> particularly where the conditions of the affluent society prevail. This situation is of no help to planners in their moralistic preoccupation with the tenet of their code of conduct, the *raison d'être* of their practice: neither is it of help to the galaxy of aspiring participants to the plan-making process, because there appear to be no satisfactory all-embracing guidelines within which to interpret the significance of their own interests. The lack of generally supported social goals, such as the revolutionary and radical aims of liberty, equality, material welfare, and others of a similar character, has caught society in a state of unpreparedness; neither the public, nor the politicians, nor the public servants seem to be conceptually or politically prepared to cope with the resulting confusion.

<sup>(42)</sup> Bodenheimer (1962), p. 213.

<sup>(43)</sup> Lippmann (1955), *Essays in the Public Philosophy*, Hamish Hamilton, London, p. 42.

<sup>(44)</sup> Braybrooke (1962), p. 141.

*The Legal Interpretation of the Public Interest*

There is no respite from confusion in the search for a legal interpretation of the public interest. For many years there has been a protracted and sometimes animated discussion involving political scientists, lawyers, politicians, bureaucrats, and to a significantly lesser extent members of the public, on the nature of administrative law. In countries with democratic governments the changing relationship of the individual and the State has provoked agitation, particularly as, no matter what the political persuasion of the governing party, the activities of government have spread into the broad management of the economy, the provision and management of social services, and by means of delegation, have passed power from the legislature to the executive and administrative branches. This extension of governmental activity has generated debates on individual freedom versus administrative efficiency. Forming integral parts of most planning systems supported by a statutory code, are elaborate procedures, plan formulation, public consultation, inquiries, and ministerial approval; the guiding principle throughout the gamut of procedures seems to be the fostering of the public interest, or the safeguarding of it against all manner of overt or camouflaged pressures from sectional interests. But, such observations cannot be subjected to scientific analysis, because there are few statutory definitions of the public interest, and those that do exist are too removed from the matters of concern to urban and regional planning to be capable of easy contextual translation. It may be presumed that the statements and judgements of politicians, public officials and the judiciary are founded on working hypotheses of the concept; but, investigations of such statements tends to support the belief that there are as many interpretations of the concept as interpreters. One generalisation has validity through most contexts in which adjudication is necessary to resolve an incompatibility between particular and general interests, and that is that the law (either by the letter, or by legal interpretation) errs partially towards the general or the presumed superior interest. However, both the law and the interpretations of it are not static; although precedents are part of the decision process, the ultimate controls are the changes manifest in society towards its own values and standards.

One of the continuing dilemmas in the prosecution of its activities, is the confusion that may arise in determining precisely the rights and duties of local government. The legality of the conduct of local authorities, and their agents the public officials, may be determined either by the express words of an empowering statute, or by the adjudication of the discretion within which an official may act without need of specific statements. In respect of 'the public interest' statutes are conspicuously lacking in determined statements, particularly in so far as they omit positive descriptions of what may be construed as the public interest. In contrast, the discretionary powers for action conferred on the executive and administrative branches of government, are considerable. Leys and Perry (1959), addressed themselves to a clarification of the philosophical and judicial interpretations of the public interest concept. There was an attempt to deduce from usage of the term in statutes, court decisions and government statements, a specific meaning; the result of the investigation was a realisation that, rather than imposing precision on the terms, the legal system had so hedged the concept with qualifications, exceptions, conditions and exclusions, that it remained imprecise and flexible. It is in this context that Wade's description of the effect of a statutory conferment of power on a local authority should be interpreted. He interprets the situation to be that the powers are conferred to enable a service to be given for the benefit of the public as a whole, and that this does not necessarily accommodate an entitlement by right for redress because of injury sustained by an individual interest.<sup>(45)</sup> It is widely interpreted both within and outside the legal profession, that the discretionary powers operationalised by local authorities are discharged for the benefit of the community as a whole, and that particular interests are furthered coincidentally rather than deliberately.<sup>(46)</sup> In respect of discretionary powers, the courts cannot be asked to substitute their own determinations of

<sup>(45)</sup> Wade (1957), *Constitutional Law* (Wade and Phillip's), 5th edition, Longmans, Green, London. Part VII (Administrative Law), chap. 1.

<sup>(46)</sup> If it is suspected that particular interests are being deliberately fostered, and that this action may not benefit a wider spectrum of interests, or may be prejudicial to it, the discretionary powers, or the law from which they are derived, or the action consequent upon them, may be challenged by common law liability in fact.

discretion for those of the government instrumentality being challenged; in fact, the essential criteria for challenge are only three—that the power to act does not exist in law, or that, if it does, it has been exceeded, or that it has been exercised for an unauthorised purpose.

Throughout this maze of potential legitimate activity, and the looser ties of discretion, there are no rational determinations of the meaning of 'the public interest'. Leys (1962) has pointed to three indicators, but they lack the necessary precision. His three indicators or criteria which need to be satisfied for administrative or executive activity to be interpreted as in the public interest are (a) the maximisation of interest satisfactions, (b) the determination by due process of law, and (c) the motivation to avoid destructive social conflict. Of these, the first and last are subject to change through time and circumstance, whilst the second—the criterion of due process of law—is the one possibility to impose consistency on the determination of the public interest. It constitutes the necessary residual factor to secure impartiality in governmental decision-making. But, the law persistently omits a specification of the concept of the public interest; this renders the residual factor of only metaphysical significance.

In law there is a tendency to operate in a hierarchical structural context of interests, with a second tendency for that context to be drawn according to politico-geographic units. These tendencies contribute to the two general expressions of utility of the public interest concept; firstly, it relates to the established (by experience and development) societal values; and secondly, it relates to the parameters of action. Thus, the legal interpretations have reference to (a) value systems derived from various quantitative aggregations of the public, (b) value systems held by individuals, and (c) value relationships to matters of substance. In the context of urban and regional planning these three referents may be translated as goal statements from interest groups (i.e. 'a'), aspirations and conceptions of individuals (i.e. 'b'), and physical plan preferences (i.e., 'c'). These three criteria are applicable to situations which are promotional and those which are protective in law. Cohen (1962) has drawn attention to a paradox; the operation of the aggregation principle tends to be sympathetic to majority interests, whereas there may be situations in which, in

the context of a different time horizon or in order to alleviate prejudicial conditions, the public interest would be better served by the prosecution of a minority interest. This realisation reinforces the suspicion that in law, as in the real world, decisions have both quantitative and qualitative dimensions.

That the law persists with such an imprecise concept as the public interest must be a source of constant surprise. An investigation of current planning and planning-related law in Australia, Britain, and the United States has failed to provide substantial indications of a meaning for the public interest.<sup>(47)</sup> In order to achieve some comprehension of the concept within a statutory framework, reference may be made to the legislation concerned with the conduct of trading practices. Although the law in this area is not strictly relevant to urban and regional planning, it does exemplify the guidelines that may be enacted; certainly, the guidelines have a history of successful prosecution.

Rees (1964) used the *Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1956* as a basis for the identification of possible legal determination of the public interest. Although this piece of legislation is peculiar to Britain, and is now twenty years old, there are general matters of applicability to this present discussion. Section 21 of the Act presumes that restrictive trade practices are detrimental to the public interest, and that the practices are prejudicial unless particular defences can be successfully pleaded. This Section places the responsibility of determining the public interest upon the defendants, by requiring them to show how their activities contribute positively to the creation and maintenance of the broad community interest. The Act (Section 21) lists seven defences which may be pleaded:

1. protection of the public;
2. maintenance of specific and substantial benefits;
3. maintenance of competition;
4. maintenance of flows of goods or services;
5. maintenance of employment levels;
6. preservation of advantageous external linkages;
7. support of other measures found to be in the public interest.

<sup>(47)</sup> The investigation was carried out, using as primary sources the commentaries of Fogg (1974).

In general, and more particularly in respect of urban and regional planning, it may be deduced that the public interest is promoted or protected if the community is able to enjoy increased or improved facilities, amenities and services; if these provisions are sufficient (quantity) and adequate (quality); if they are convenient, efficient, compatible, not exclusive, free of onerous restrictions; if minority interests are wholly recognised and accommodated; if external (geopolitical) relationships are not prejudiced; and if most other individual rights and privileges are not unnecessarily or unduly constrained or denied. The law takes upon itself a determination of the equitable balance of interests, and a definition of those interests within prescribed geopolitical units. For example, under the 1947 Development Plan System, the interests of the community in the area covered by any one plan were pursued to the exclusion of even adjoining plan areas, even though the Minister's responsibility was to adjudicate on the compatibility of plans; in such a situation, the localised nature of a determined public interest was contrary to the more general interest in the British Isles. Similarly, in the generation of regional strategies that was a legacy of the shortlived Department of Economic Affairs in Britain, there was a distinct lack of compatibility between adjoining regions, and between any one region and the remainder of the regions. This raises matters of acute concern in the present era favouring the establishment of large, primarily economic geopolitical unions, such as the European Economic Community (E.E.C.); the particular interests of one region are unlikely to receive more than token sympathy from another region at the opposite pole of the 'continent'. Further, the differences of cultural tradition will be likely to render partially incompatible the respective planning philosophies.

The legal interpretation of the public interest is not sufficiently precise, particularly in respect of urban and regional planning, to alleviate the difficulties of comprehension experienced in the review of the philosophical dimensions of the concept. Schubert (1958) has endeavoured to rationalise the judicial interpretations, although he has conceded that prevailing legal theory in this matter has limited utility for the guidance of the judiciary. In the three groups of theory he identifies, he has followed Ley's (1943) three classes of discretion-

ary power; one is concerned with the application of technical discretion, in which decisions are automatically in the public interest because they flow from a neutral or value free technical, rational process, "adherence to which assures results... that are in the public interest."<sup>(48)</sup> Another group or class of theory is concerned with giving structure to the public interest, or perhaps creating it, by the manipulation of legal precedents; in this form of social engineering<sup>(49)</sup> "the job of the courts is not to discover the public will, but to make it... it is not what man wants that is in the public interest; it is what the judge thinks will be good for him."<sup>(50)</sup> The third class of legal discretion offers a realistic compromise between the mechanistic approach of the first class, and the authoritarianism of the second; it proposes that "the judge is a mere catalyst by means of which conflict among special interests is transmuted into the public interest."<sup>(51)</sup>

There is a similarity in the purpose of law and urban and regional planning, and it is stated simply by Cardozo; "the final cause of law is the welfare of society."<sup>(52)</sup> Even so, statutes are typically unhelpful in defining the public interest which the legal and planning professions pursue, or create, or manipulate, or, on occasions, seem even to frustrate.<sup>(53)</sup>

#### *Individual Interests, Group Interests, and the Public Interest*

Despite the many protestations that public policies are couched in terms whose intention is to pursue the public interest, contemporary (Western) political philosophies "continue to value the subjective definition and pursuit of individual interest very highly."<sup>(54)</sup> This is

<sup>(48)</sup> Schubert (1958), p. 21.

<sup>(49)</sup> 'Social engineering' has been described as the creation and maintenance of the proper balance among the public, social and private interests. Pound (1942), *Social Control Through Law*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven.

<sup>(50)</sup> Schubert (1958), p. 22.

<sup>(51)</sup> Schubert (1958), p. 5.

<sup>(52)</sup> Cardozo (1921), *The Nature of the Judicial Process*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, p. 66.

<sup>(53)</sup> "Their (i.e. the courts and administrative agencies) historic role has been to protect *private* interests." Schubert (1958), p. 23 (my italics).

<sup>(54)</sup> Flathman (1966), p. 32.



almost inescapable, particularly in the prevailing social milieu in which there are persistent changes in the long term goals of society, and, of most significance to the theme of this book, changes in the attitudes to and the willingness to participate in community decision-making. For these reasons, and others, the public interest is not necessarily a constant; it is a chimera, a goal to be aimed at rather than an objective to be achieved. It is the heterogeneous nature, and generally ill-informed state of the public that frustrates any definitive indication of where its interest lies, though inferences may be drawn from its behaviour in specific instances (Chetwynd, 1972).

Previously, two major attributions of the concept were differentiated, one concerned with quantitative determination, the other with determination by government fiat. It is appropriate here to consider the first of these in more detail. In testimony before a Congressional Committee, it has been suggested that "no public policy could ever be the mere sum of the demands of organised special interests... for there are vital common interests that cannot be organised by pressure groups."<sup>(55)</sup> This exposes the principal contentious argument, whether the public interest is a simple summation of all individual interests, or whether it is an aggregate gained in some other way.

Much of the liberal democratic political philosophy argues from the premise that the principal purpose of government is to maximise the satisfaction of individual self-interests; thus, any public policy that may be closely identified with a totality of individual interests will be in the public interest. This is the argument of Bentham. It builds upon another premise that man will contribute the greatest offering to society if, in so doing, he reaps a maximum return, i.e. he satisfies his self-interests most completely. The prime condition attached to this argument is that what is in a man's self-interest is self-determined and not imposed by external stimuli to the *objective* (rationalised) status of interest. The Benthamite thesis is frequently attacked. However, caution needs to be exercised before his insistence upon the satisfaction of individual interests and then a summation of those to attain the public interest is rejected (Flathman, 1966). There is logic in the argument that one level of interest can, by

<sup>(55)</sup> Cited, Zeigler (1964), p. 22.

aggregation, become another level of total interest, even though there is a shared belief of all individuals that there should be a comprehensive control system; this is the view of Burke, Hegel and Machievelli.

A characteristic of the operations of government and public institutions is that there are occasions in which there are conflicts (or a potential for conflict) between the interests of different groups, and that in satisfying one interest, it becomes impossible to satisfy the interests of another group (if not impossible, then at best the possibility is seriously minimised). "Reliance upon individualism as a basis for political decisions stumbles against the root facts of interdependence and social conflict... self-interest has a legitimate place in the public interest, but deciding whose self interest and to what extent requires the utilization of values and principles which transcend such interests."<sup>(56)</sup> The demands of individual interests constitute a part of political life; every citizen is affected by the interests of others, and therefore *ought* to take them into account. If individual citizens assess their personal interests and formulate their political demands from them without considering the aspirations and interests of other individual citizens, there is a likelihood that no one citizen will completely satisfy his interests; the level of satisfaction will be reduced in accordance with the declared pursuit of others to maximise their interests. This is conspicuously a matter of moral behaviour. To impose one's interest upon others renders 'the others' incapable of achieving their interests to the full unless all parties shared (even ultimately) identical interests. Rousseau has described the desirable situation in which political actors consider the impact of their actions and demands on other members of the public, and personally reduce the idiosyncratic demands as part of the process of seeking common ground with other interest statements. Thus, the quantitative determination approach to the public interest does not necessarily require unanimity of interests in order for public policies to be effective and satisfactory. Flathman (1966) has suggested that the function of the public interest concept is "to justify action in the face of disagreement."<sup>(57)</sup>

<sup>(56)</sup> Flathman (1966), p. 38.

<sup>(57)</sup> Flathman (1966), p. 41.

Cassinelli (1958) has argued that the interpretation of individual interests as part of the public interest may lead to anti-democratic results. However, Flathman argues the opposite case. His case is that it is important for the public to assert their interests and demands, and to contribute to the process of determining the public interest. This case recognises the moral and educational orientations required of each citizen, but stresses that awareness and due recognition of other interests does not necessarily imply the ignoring of one's own; 'our' includes 'mine' by definition or by mutual consent. Flathman's interpretation of the composition of the public interest, and the means of achieving its expression, seems to advocate widespread citizen participation; such involvement in the political process would entail participation in the determination of goals and objectives to which the stage of plan generation in the plan-making process would of necessity conform. However, the norms of human behaviour might militate against the subjugation, no matter to what significant or insignificant degree, of an individual's interests to those of an ill-defined public.

The 'ill-defined public' is not a realistic concept, if only for the reason that such a heterogeneous body would tend to formalise into groups, particularly in respect of sensitive societal issues. Bentley (1949) has remarked that there are always decision-making situations in which groups emerge to confront one another, because society is composed of a complex of groups with the differentiated interests. Bentley and Truman (1951) are representative of subscribers to this group theory of political action, which simply holds that every public policy operates to the advantage of some sections of the public whilst (perhaps temporarily) disadvantaging others. Ziegler (1964) has considered the functions of interest groups in American society from the premise that all public policy is formed as a result of the interplay of group interests. This may be the most convenient means of ascertaining the public interest—the outcome of an exchange between competing interests, whether or not those interests are promoted simultaneously. Bentley has remarked that the political interests and activities of any one group are directed against other groups or the remainder of society, and therefore, society is in fact a complex of groups. This heterogeneous nature of society is not compatible with

a public interest theory insisting on the quantitative summation principle. The Bentley thesis, however, does concede the derivation of the public interest from group interaction and difference resolution. In respect of the differences of majority and minority interests, Olson (1965) has pointed out that the larger interest is the "more nearly general interest",<sup>(58)</sup> and that despite the concern expressed by many people of the potential power of pressure groups there is a perceptible tendency for most informed commentators to hesitatingly approve of the functions such groups fulfil and of the beneficial effects of their activities. Schubert's (1960) description of his 'Realist' category, conforms to this view, indicating that the principal benefit of the democratic system of government is the multiplicity of the points of access afforded to the many conflicting interests which inevitably (and necessarily) arise in pluralist societies. In the democratic system it falls to the public service to facilitate the continuous adjustment of conflicting interests that is necessary to avoid a disturbance to the equilibrium of the community.

For urban and regional planning, the group interest theory is particularly useful. It ignores the naive notion that the general or public interest is derived from a summation of all expressed interests, and leans towards the conception that, as society is inevitably composed of groups of interests, it is the public service, (including the planner), which may attempt to monitor and attune the variety of interests into policies, plans or proposals that, at the very least, does the least number least harm. The benefit, for planning, of this approach, is that the adjustment of conflicting interests would be achieved within a proper technical context—the political aspirations will have been satisfied by the recognition given to the groups and the encouragement to them to become involved and become more satisfied by the filtering of interests through the competent technical facility of the planners. Such a plan-making process might be construed as deliberately circumventing the conventional political proprieties of the elected representative system. This need not be so; the responsibility of the elected representative could be translated from the articulation of the aspirations of the interest groups to the guidance of

<sup>(58)</sup> Olson (1965), p. 121.

those interests through the appropriate means of achieving a more satisfactory technical expression of those aspirations. There may be views to the contrary, but such a system would seem to be little more than (a) a parallel course to the delegation of development control powers from committees or councils to officers, and (b) a logical extension of delegated responsibilities. The justification for this lies in the frequent failure of groups to properly conduct their case, and particularly to argue an objective planning case rather than an emotive, political case (Amos, 1971). The 'Planning Aid' idea is being fostered in Britain to accommodate this aspiration of the planning fraternity (see pp. 314-7). Thus, in this system there is a significant possibility that a realistic expression of the public interest may emerge.

In addition, because of the complex nature of society, it is beyond the capacity of most elected representatives to appropriately mediate between the conflict of interests of groups within himself. As the range of interests and their complexity is likely to preclude overt articulation of them, the derivation of a mediated or moderated or synthesised public interest might be most suitably achieved through the medium of the omnipartisan and objective public service; in urban and regional planning, this means the planner.

Hill (1970) has drawn attention to the need for equality of treatment to all interests; if one individual, or one group is encouraged to participate in decision-making, then all other individuals or groups of sympathetic or contrary persuasion, and all other parties to the particular issue deserve to be invited to become effectively involved. Her proposition is that interests should not come to conflict, but should achieve a mutually satisfactory mediation by "combin(ing) their efforts rather than fight(ing) each other".<sup>(59)</sup> and by avoiding the tendency to pursue their limited objectives blindly. Concerted action among groups is potentially more influential than even the most strident individual protesting voice; and both the politicians and the public service are more likely to interpret such action as generally representative of the public interest. One means of overcoming this dilemma has been advocated in the previous paragraphs,

<sup>(59)</sup> Hill (1970), p. 198.

i.e. using the competence of the public service rather than the politicking of the elected representatives. The Hill thesis is for a revitalisation of local democracy, by a controlled momentum of the local protest and local promotional groups. Of particular concern to her thesis is the emergence of 'sufficient people', i.e. the quantitative determination, to equate with the public interest; Hill has gone some way to defining the quantitative element, associating it with the ability to gain access to the centres of power with a voice that commands attention.

Apart from drawing attention to the 'group theory' interpretation of the significance of private interests in the 'higher level' public interest, this review of the dilemma of the hierarchical nature of interests has failed to achieve a precise clarification. The reason lies partly in the confused state of the art, and the inconclusive state of theoretical formulations. Pennock (1962) has hazarded four propositions which contribute significantly to some clarification of the matter: he suggests (1) that individuals have interests of which they might not be fully aware; (2) that there are interests of generations yet unborn that need consideration; (3) that interests are only maximised in and through society; and (4) that the coincidence of the public and private interests needs to be perceived by individuals if they are to participate in their prosecution. These propositions are of particular pertinence to urban and regional planning. Without much serious doubt, the philosophy of planning pursues particular ends, and pursues them in a manner that is often beyond the comprehension of the individual, although their pursuit may be related to his interests. Planning is future-oriented, and needs to take into account aspirations which are not articulated at the time the plan is drawn either because the people to be affected are not yet born, or because they have yet to migrate to the area of the plan. The interests of individuals are perhaps best achieved through a comprehensively planned environment; in this situation some personal hardships are inescapable. Finally, Pennock foreshadows the participation movement by suggesting that individual support of public programmes is more likely if the participants can be made aware that there is a coincidence of goals and objectives. The matter is not without persisting difficulties, but the preference for administrative action to

marry private interests, and to synthesise those with a more general interest seems reasonably clear.<sup>(60)</sup> The conceptual muddle, the inadequacy of legal determination, and the dichotomy of interests continues to frustrate the specification of the public interest. However, it may be argued that 'the public interest' "is the central concept of a civilised polity" and that "its genius lies not in its clarity but in its perverse and persistent moral intrusion upon the internal and external discourse of rulers and ruled alike."<sup>(61)</sup>

The concept certainly has a critical moderating influence in decision-making contexts in which the participants are unashamedly partisan. In these situations, the 'qualities' of the concept—its vagueness, its lack of legal specification, and its dubious democratic nature—are particularly important.

The danger of isolating these two concepts for special consideration is in attracting to them undue attention. However, the examination has revealed that these two concepts are the essential pivots of citizen participation, and that the commitment to any practices of participation should be conditional upon an awareness of what form of representation is being canvassed and which interests are being promoted. Although specific reference to these issues has been avoided in the following chapters to avoid monotonous repetition and to leave their statement in relative clarity, they need to be in the forefront of attention in the examinations of the decision-making processes (Chapter 3), the participants (Chapters 4 and 5), and the means of participation (Chapter 7).

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<sup>(60)</sup> Bailey (1962), p. 105: "One of the key arts of administration of politics is to discover decisional formulae which bind together private and public interests."

<sup>(61)</sup> Bailey (1962), p. 106.

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## PART TWO

### *The Environment of Decision-making*

There is an almost inescapable danger of urban and regional planning becoming irrelevant to the means of solving perceived community problems, of shaping the future pattern of development. Kaplan's (1973) critique of the practice of planning in the United States, and Eversley's (1973) review of the state of the art in Britain have highlighted the areas of inadequacies in the methodology, concepts and tools of planning. However, there are signs that the methodological, conceptual and technological dimensions of urban and regional planning are being significantly strengthened. This situation has been, and continues to be brought about by the introduction of a galaxy of inputs from social and management science, concerned with the revelation of the inter-relatedness of decisions and proposals, the impacts of one on others, and the provision of tools with which to play a less deterministic role in decision-making. The current wave of enthusiasm for seeing planning less as a means of 'placing' physical objects and more with interpreting it as a process encompassing certain generic steps common to all forms of decision-making renders the practice more capable of adjustment to changes in societal aspirations, and the means of satisfying them.

The general environmental context in which decisions are made has been briefly described by Friedmann (1966). In his catalogue of characteristics of his model 'environment for decision', reference is made to the crucial determinant relevant to the considerations of this book: "the manner of deciding will influence what it is that one can decide and this is bound to influence the results of the deci-

sion".<sup>(1)</sup> There is considerable justification for the belief that planners will profit from an increased awareness of the relationship of decisions to their environment. However, the literature of decision theory does not reveal a single methodology, a single simple conceptual device upon which to hang the conventional impedimenta of planning—data, value judgements, plans, reports, etc. Faludi (1973) has comprehensively, yet concisely, reviewed the various dimensions of this dilemma.

Planning may be variously interpreted as a framework for action, or a dynamic system of action. For the purposes of Part 2, both interpretations are considered within carefully drawn parameters, and within the tacit acceptance of Gergen's (1969) comment that "not all members of society are implicated to an equal degree in the processes and acts of decision-making."<sup>(2)</sup> Firstly, in Chapter 3, consideration is given to the processes, networks and frameworks that structure and give rational form to plan-making. In the brief review of process statements particular attention is drawn to the opportunities for citizen participation. The review encompasses the classic simple hypothesis of Geddes, a range of theoretical constructs, a number of operational processes, and the peculiar process of development control. These considerations are followed by a description of participation frameworks, an examination of a number of means of self-help, and a brief discussion of the impact of different political decision-making contexts (Rabinovitz, 1968). In Chapters 4 and 5, attention is turned from the process, its components, opportunities and aids, to the participants which provide the dynamic element. Consideration is given to the participants' commitment, competence, motivation, and political purposes, drawing upon a number of pilot studies conducted during 1973, and from documentary sources spread liberally through political and social science, and psychology.

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<sup>(2)</sup> Gergen (1969), p. 182.

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## CHAPTER 3

### Processes and Frameworks

The literature and language of urban and regional planning has accumulated, particularly during the past ten years or so, a peculiar style; the 'lyrical' attributes from the legacy of the influence of civic design have been partly replaced by the more precise and 'harsh' terms imported and then situationally translated from the social sciences, engineering and management science. Of particular significance in this change has been the spread of terms, concepts, techniques, and methodologies which had been previously almost peculiar to such institutions as the Rand Corporation (Santa Monica, California) and the Institute of Operational Research (London). Planning, whilst engaged in its continuing search for legitimacy (of which the inclination towards citizen participation practices may be one expression) and identity, has become susceptible to the temptation to extend its vocabulary and its concepts and methodologies by importation, rather than by internal development. Rosner (1972) has drawn attention to "the contemporary word engineers (who) build bridges to nowhere",<sup>(1)</sup> and remarks upon the curious lapse of planners and politicians into the use of words whose meaning is obscure or distorted "at a time when the involvement of the lay public is (an) avowed aim".

One such introduction to both theory and practice in planning is the concept and methodology of processes and networks. Huffschildt (1971) has revealed the genesis of process methodology, particularly as it is applied to the metropolitan scale of planning, as a response to the need at that scale to cope with (a) a complexity of social, physical, economic and budgetary, and political issues,

<sup>(1)</sup> He also cites Gower's indictment of the language game thus: "It is a sign of slovenly thinking to qualify words that have an absolute meaning."

(b) a vast assembly of data, (c) a requirement to translate plans into policies, programmes and regulations for action, and (d) a rapid rise of community organisations and citizen's groups to articulate social matters. These, and similar pressures have enlarged the agenda and procedures for planning, and the response has been a continuous attention to the development and refinement of appropriate methodologies and techniques. This constitutes part of what Eversley (1973) has referred to as 'the new planning science'. However, such changes should not be accepted, or introduced, without cognisance of at least two cautions: firstly, there is not yet evidence that the new wave of planning is capable of producing better planning, but there is justification for considering planning to be more political and thus (perhaps) more relevant (Wood, 1968); secondly, in spite of the exciting prospect offered by process methodology, it should not be assumed that it provides an exclusive path to 'the truth' (Mocine, 1966). Thus, the recent introduction or prosecution of processes and networks for planning should be construed as guides, as means to achieving an optimised if not maximised condition of human welfare in the built and natural environments.

The decision areas of urban and regional planning are complex, perhaps no less complex than those of military strategy, strategic weaponry, and space exploration; but, it should be conceded that the need for precision is less in planning (because of the greater degree of uncertainty flowing from the impact of behavioural variables), and there is the possibility of substitution. However, there can be little quarrel with the endeavour to apply the decision rigour considered commonplace in the activities cited to urban and regional planning. Certainly, the introduction of such methodology could obviate the tendency to use the "single format, carbon copy, any-municipality-will-do, instant plan".<sup>(2)</sup> But, and again a cautionary note, there is need to seriously consider the desirability of importing without the necessary 'cultural' translation practices, and methodologies from one planning situation to another.<sup>(3)</sup>

The introduction of process methodology to urban and regional planning has offered a rational means of reaching decisions, of identi-

<sup>(2)</sup> Wood (1968), p. 245.

<sup>(3)</sup> Eversley (1973), p. 124; Fagence (1973).

fyng the gamut of pertinent inputs, the inter-relatedness of the inputs and the potential interaction of appropriate participants. Before the revelation of the decision-making structure there was good cause for excluded parties to question its validity; the exposure of the structure in the emerging 'tradition' renders opportunities for exclusions to be identified and, if appropriate, to be redressed. Few, if any, aspects of the plan-making process can be without the accommodation of public inputs; Connor (1972) suggests a more distinctive notion, that the planning process provides a situation in which all parties may share their respective experience, knowledge and goals in order to achieve a meaningful plan.

Two dimensions of process methodology may be explored. The first, is the linear (or cyclic) process composed of a sequence of inter-related steps; the second, is the perceived structure of potential involvement.

#### PLAN-MAKING PROCESSES

In the exercise of developing a methodology for tackling a particular regional study it is reported (Bigwood, undated) that a conceptual tool was devised to assist in the handling of data and the sequence of inputs to the decision process; this was titled 'the matrix of interrelated functions'. It is to unravel the complexities of 'what happens next?' that process methodology has been introduced to planning practice. It would seem likely, given the present accelerating rate and scope of planning determinations, that if the decision-making aids presently available or being developed and refined in other contexts are not to be employed in planning situations, the result will be the perpetuation of "the depressing alternative of having to stagger from one crisis to another increasingly in despair at being able to correct the results of *ad hoc* decisions",<sup>(4)</sup> of a problem-solving or goals-achieving process to which it is not certain which parties may be appropriate and at what stage they should be involved. Despite the advantages of process methodology (Sarly, 1972) the extent to which any planning situation has been structured to conform to such

<sup>(4)</sup> Bigwood (undated), p. 11.



guidelines, and by implication, the extent to which the opportunities for public involvement have been considered and revealed, has been dependent upon the willingness of the traditional decision-makers to divest and share their power, and to the talent of the planning team. It is necessary to concede, however, that the attractiveness of process methodology lies mostly for planners trained during the last ten years or so, and that for most other practitioners, the politicians and the public, the whole idea of structuring the process of reaching decisions, or even the possibility of doing so, is shrouded in mystery. Recent official publications (DOE, 1971) have done little to clarify matters, or to dispel suspicions. Two American academics (Van de Ven, Delbecq, 1972) have devised a simple model which, it is claimed, can accommodate innovation, creativity, and routine operations, and can identify the essential steps from problem identification to implementation of the solution in a manner which is comprehensible to all potential participants; it is thus "a viable process for involving various reference groups."<sup>(5)</sup>

This is the context in which the validity of processes should perhaps be considered, viz., the opportunities for public involvement that are built-in to, or are implicit in the decision-making structure. A recent exposure of the potential to prescript particular decision-making situations, (Levin, 1973), which effectively usurps the expected operation of traditional democratic procedures and rights, strengthens the case for the generation and disclosure of the intended process of decision-making.<sup>(6)</sup> In the review which follows, particular attention is given to the identifiable opportunities for citizen participation.

#### *The Geddesian Model*

Patrick Geddes has been credited as the author and inspiration of a number of conceptual aids which have become useful starting-points for many considerations in planning theory and practice. Notable amongst these are his interpretation of Le Play's classic

<sup>(5)</sup> Van de Ven, and Delbecq (1972), p. 6.

<sup>(6)</sup> Levin describes the capacity of particular participants to occupy a 'decision space' so as to limit the scope for other contributions—a particular type of filibuster.

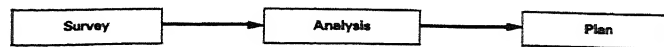
triad, PLACE-WORK-FOLK, and of particular relevance to the present discussion of the planning process, the simple notion of SURVEY-ANALYSIS-PLAN (Fig. 3.1). This simple concept forms the basis of the more complex processes devised to identify the myriad dimensions of system inter-relationships and feedbacks; when the particular contextual trappings, the esoteric embellishments and elaborations are removed, the residual process bears close resemblance to the Geddesian model. The precise derivation of the triad is obscure, but there are two strong clues in Geddes' classic work, *Cities in Evolution* (1915); firstly, he states, "...the survey prepares for and points towards the plan",<sup>(7)</sup> and secondly, he suggests that "our science (thus) cannot but point to action, our diagnosis to treatment".<sup>(8)</sup> There is no overt discussion of the elements of the triad, nor of the triad itself, so that all the references made to it in most of the discussions of process methodology must draw their references from the statements quoted.

It is in the later chapters of *Cities in Evolution* that Geddes reveals his interpretation of citizen participation in the process of plan-making. He remarks upon three means of involvement: involvement by education through public exhibitions, active participation in the collection of information, and involvement by offering alternative planning solutions and proposals to those of the planning authority or its consultants. At a congress of museum curators held in Dundee in 1907, Geddes charged his audience with a failure of communication with large sections of the community. This failure was attributed to the limited scope of many exhibitions. Geddes' proposition was that the scope be extended to capture the interest and imagination of wide sections of the community, even if, in so doing, it resulted in pandering to some of the particular causes of well-intentioned community groups. Such action, Geddes suggested, would be likely to engender a sympathetic public attitude towards the conduct of planning by giving expression to community matters, and by revealing the context of constraints and opportunities which effectively give shape to planning proposals—for example, population trends, local vegetational and topographical features, the antiquarian legacy, and

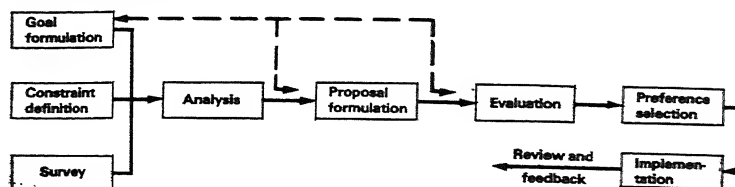
<sup>(7)</sup> Geddes (1915), p. xxvi.

<sup>(8)</sup> Geddes (1915), p. xxvii.

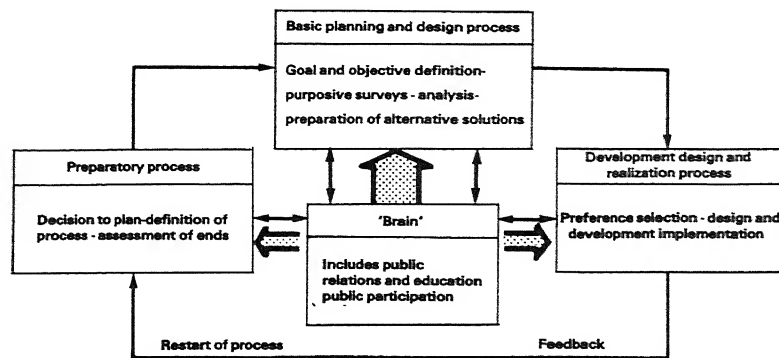
1a. The Geddesian 'model'



1b. The Lichfield 'model'



1c. The Travis 'model'



1a. Based on Geddes (1915)

1b. Based on Lichfield (1968)

1c. Based on Travis (1969)

 Identified opportunities for citizen participation

Fig. 3.1. A selection of 'models' of the planning process.

so on. To help with the collection of relevant information, Geddes proposed that the public be invited to assist, and, particularly, that the labour of school-children be enlisted. His rationale on this was that school-children learn by doing, and that, having learned, are likely to communicate their newly-acquired knowledge to friends and parents; in any event, the children of one period become the potentially better-informed adults of the succeeding generation. In the promotion of 'learning-by-doing', Geddes was seeking to extend the aggregate of public awareness, and the development of a more socially and environmentally conscious population. The involvement procedures during the phase of plan generation were to be a heightened awareness of potential plan solutions arising from a converse with sample solutions to similar situations from other cities and districts, posted in an exhibition, an invitation to 'post' personalised solutions and design suggestions, and an invitation to become committed to 'public and journalistic discussion' of the propositions from every source, whether from laymen, the planning agency, or from invited commentators and consultants. Geddes' suggestions went further: that the city pay the appropriate professional scale fee to any laymen whose proposals were finally incorporated in the plan.<sup>(9)</sup>

For all its simplicity, and its innovations, the Geddesian model has been subjected to criticism, particularly from the proponents of the new planning science. Almost inevitably, before the appreciation of the significance of goal-setting as the fundamental step in the planning process, the planning exercise has commenced with the survey phase, a phase during which much of the information collection has been both unselective and uncritical, almost as if the process was a ritual (McLoughlin, 1969). The possibility of this occurrence would be increased if untrained surveyors were to be used—and this was one of Geddes' most insistent proposals.

#### *Process Methodology—Some Theoretical Constructs*

The specialist literature on process methodology is growing at a phenomenal rate (Sarley, 1972). In this vast source, two dimensions

<sup>(9)</sup> Geddes (1915), p. 130.

or directions of effort may be discerned, one of which is concerned with the sequence of operations leading to the production of a plan, and the other of which is attentive to the socio-political and psychological facets of decision-making *per se*. Chadwick (1971) in answering his own question, 'what is planning?' declares "planning is a process, a process of human thought and action based upon that thought".<sup>(10)</sup> This observation, along with others in the same vane (McLoughlin, 1969; Eversley, 1973; Friedmann, 1969; Faludi, 1973) contends that planning has for too long concentrated on the physical artefacts of the exercise (i.e. the plans and other documentation), and has given too little attention to the *processes* of plan-making and the art of judgement. Both of these matters are conciliatory to the definition of opportunities for citizen participation.

Before briefly reviewing a number of process statements, it is appropriate to consider some recent observations on the theory of processes.

Faludi (1973) has sagely commented that planning "is a messy operation";<sup>(11)</sup> it is difficult to conceive of planning in any other way, if only because of its need to accommodate the responses of uncontrollable variables, particularly manifest in the will of the people. However, the planning process need not be a description of how planning is done; preferably, it should be an indication, a conceptual framework *for rational action* through which substantive decisions may be reached. This approach to plan-making has been traced "directly from the kit-bag of civil engineering",<sup>(12)</sup> through the maze of social science manipulation with its emphasis on 'uncertainty', to the present formidable science of 'strategic choice'. Friend and Jessop (1969) have described the incompleteness of the decision process brought about by uncertainties of future intentions and of value judgements, but they advocate the drawing of a process for each decision situation if for no reason other than to provide a basic framework identifying the stages of action, the likely actors, and their inter-relatedness. Three facets of the decision-making process

<sup>(10)</sup> Chadwick (1971), p. 24.

<sup>(11)</sup> Faludi (1973), p. 81.

<sup>(12)</sup> Webber (1968, 1969).

have been distinguished to reveal the inter-connections.<sup>(13)</sup> Although the theory and the ramifications of strategic choice may be beyond the comprehension of many aspiring participants to plan-making, and Friend and Jessops' description significantly omits substantial reference to the possibility of such lay involvement, the identification of the problems associated with operating the process of strategic choice includes the consequences of "democratic guidance", which is interpreted as the action of the 'strategic control group', the membership of which is not specified.<sup>(14)</sup> The opportunities for meaningful public involvement in the decision process are not significantly greater in the AIDA technique (Friend, 1970), which, whilst capable of revealing option linkages and decision consequences, seems not yet developed to accommodate the disclosure of option and decision participants. In a more recent work on the application of operational research techniques to planning (Friend *et al.*, 1974), there is a significantly greater awareness of the need for meaningful citizen participation practices.

Attention now turns to brief considerations of a selection of processes from the literature of planning theory which have included some opportunities for public involvement.

(1) *Lichfield*. In the preamble to his discussion of goals in planning, Lichfield (1968) describes a series of steps (Fig. 3.1) which result in the production of a plan. Specific reference to the opportunities for citizen participation are omitted from the description; however, in later sections of his thesis, reference is made to levels of decisions, and to activities in which proposals are considered by 'the professionals' and 'the decision-makers' as separate identities. Lichfield's thesis accommodates public inputs by the conventional democratic means within tolerance levels set by the politicians, viz. "voting by payment in the market" (i.e. goals derived by the satisfaction horizons experienced by the public), the conduct of opinion polls, and the convening of inter-interest group discussions.

<sup>(13)</sup> Friend & Jessop (1969), Figs. 10-12, 'the departmental process', 'the committee process', 'the council process'.

<sup>(14)</sup> Friend & Jessop (1969), pp. 131-2.

(2) *Travis:Kozlowski*. In his inaugural address Travis (1969) described planning as "a key synoptic problems solving activity...a process with a logical sequence."<sup>(15)</sup> His diagrammatic process (Fig. 3.1) incorporates a continuing control mechanism, a 'brain' which activates and responds to the sequence of activities which conform to the Geddesian triad. In the 'brain' are five interacting cells—public relations education, user research, private sector, applied theoretical research, and public participation; these are considered to continuously shape the direction of the plan process. A refinement of the Travis model, though approached from a different direction, is the three stream linear process of Kozlowski (1970). His hypothesis for an integrated planning process (Fig. 3.2) operates in a total context of public interest and participation with interactions between the planning team and various sections of the community. In operational terms, Kozlowski has nominated four critical points at which citizen participation contributes to the sieving of likely solutions to goal statements; these points are at the stage of goal formulation, the verification of the goal statements and the selection of options, the choice of the preferred option, and the ultimate sanction of the plan. These four opportunities probably are representative of the minimum conducive to the description of meaningful public involvement; Kozlowski's theoretical structure does little to help the determination of the means to secure the state of meaningful involvement.

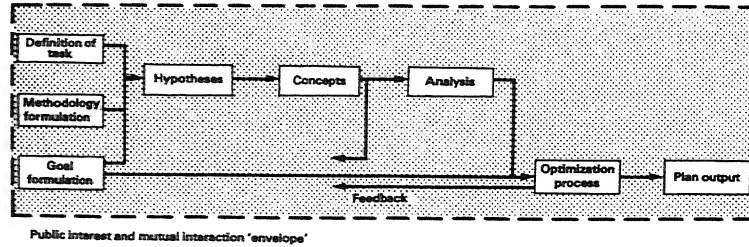
(3) *Roberts*. Mere elaborations of the Geddesian simple model, even those incorporating goal statements and recycling operations, fail to produce an integrated planning process, essentially because they fail to accord with the thought or decision processes most likely to solve problems.<sup>(16)</sup> The present state of the process art, in the majority of cases, results in the adoption of plan-making systems which are "uniquely cumbersome and wasteful"<sup>(17)</sup> and scarcely capable of accommodating an adequate level of public input. Roberts's (1974) schema (Fig. 3.2) is not strictly in the mainstream of process methodology; rather is it a device to indicate the possible location

<sup>(15)</sup> Travis (1969), p. 96.

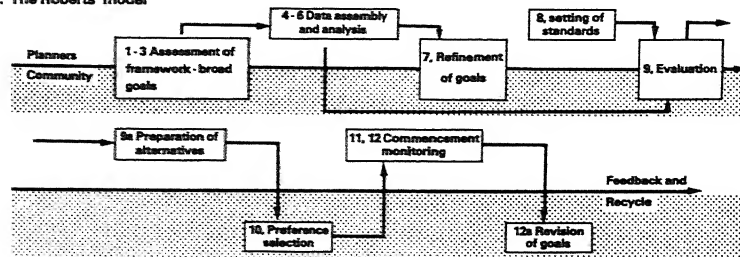
<sup>(16)</sup> Roberts (1974), p. 55.

<sup>(17)</sup> Batty (1972), cited in Roberts (1974), p. 55.

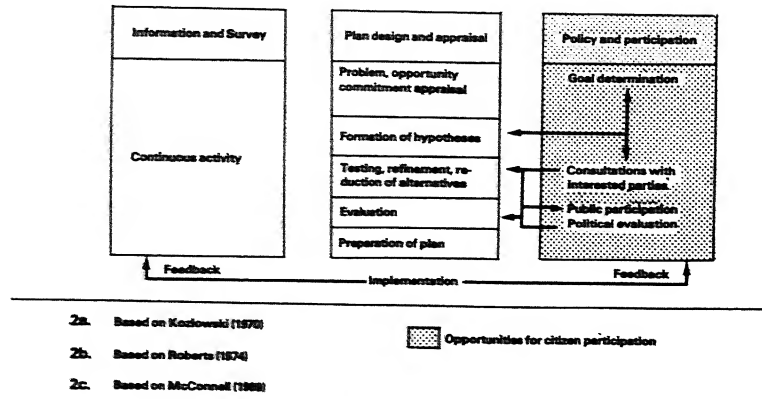
2a. The Kozlowski 'model'



2b. The Roberts 'model'



2c. The McConnell 'model'



2a. Based on Kozlowski (1970)

2b. Based on Roberts (1974)

2c. Based on McConnell (1988)

Fig. 3.2. A second selection of 'models' of the planning process.



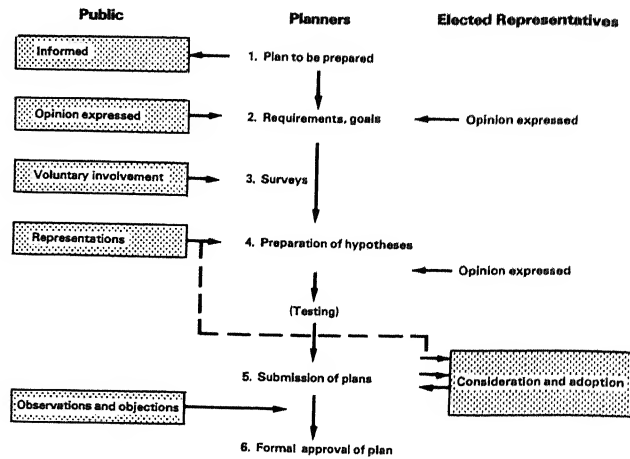
in the plan-making sequence of particular analytical or predictive techniques. For the purposes of the present discussion, it is useful to note Robert's division of the process activities into two participant 'spaces', one concerned with the activities of 'the planners', and the other with the activities of 'the community', either directly or through the conventional democratic representational system. In the process the activity of citizen participation is described as a 'relevant technique' at the stage of alternative policies and programmes, although the activities of goal specification and refinement are located within the compass of both participant 'spaces'. However, in her discussion on communication in planning,<sup>(18)</sup> Roberts suggests that communication between parties in plan-making is possibly a continuing activity, and that despite the tendency for statutory obligations to apply to specific points in the process, the dialogue, or the participation, should be prescriptive to most if not all points (i.e., as in the pervasive context of the Kozlowski model).

(4) *McConnell*. The particular usefulness of the brief statement of an idealised planning process by McConnell (1969) is its identification of three parallel and interconnected streams of activity (Fig. 3.2), the survey, the formulation of the plan, and the political prescription. As far as citizen participation is concerned, McConnell identifies participation opportunities as inputs to the determination of goals and objectives, as the expressions of public demand and political preference, and as the series of negotiations between planners, interested organisations, other authorities and levels of government. The structure of the process accommodates the importance of the determination of plan and policy preferences by means of public and (or) political resolution. This flexibility is a useful feature of the McConnell process: it is somewhat surprising that it has not achieved wider recognition.

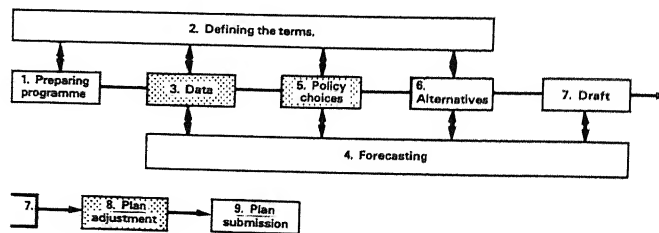
(5) *McDonald*. The McDonald (1969) process (Fig. 3.3) differs from the others considered in this section in so far as it is drawn to accommodate the involvement aspirations of a particular interest group—a local amenity society. The model concentrates on the potential

<sup>(18)</sup> Roberts (1974), chap. 10.

3a. The McDonald model



3b. The DOE management network (simplified)



3a. Based on McDonald (1969)

Opportunities for citizen participation

3b. Based on DOE (1971)

Fig. 3.3. A third selection of 'models' of the planning process.

opportunities for interest group participation, opportunities of awareness (being informed of proposals and postulated possibilities), and opportunities for action. Most processes are drawn from the viewpoint of the planners or the politicians; the different perspective of the McDonald process, therefore, serves to highlight the aspirations of (particularly) organised groups with interests deserving of consideration.

(6) *Van de Ven-Delbecq*. Finally, in this brief and by no means exhaustive consideration of theoretical constructs,<sup>(19)</sup> mention is made of the Van de Ven-Delbecq (1972) process devised for use in complex regional planning programmes. The purpose of this process was to disaggregate the sequence of problem-solving stages into "a workable set of task phases", the phases providing benchmarks for a process that might be prejudiced by the omission or operational failure of any one. The process identified at each of the key phases the appropriate 'reference groups' of laymen, politicians or experts, that need to be involved: "a guiding norm in the initial feasibility study is that all reference groups (e.g. citizens, environmental action groups, university scientists, and regional organizations) having technical and working knowledge of the land use program should have the opportunity to participate in defining the general nature of the emerging program".<sup>(20)</sup> From this early introduction of public inputs, the formula proceeds to recommend that conscious attempts be made to delegate certain planning tasks to appropriate reference groups rather than the wholesale importation of consultant expert skills. To achieve the most viable approach to planning, the model proposes the dispersion of participant reference groups throughout the plan-making organisation to monitor each developmental activity, the resolution of differences being made at open meetings. The model sets out to accommodate the desirable traits of flexibility (i.e. to be capable of reacting and responding to changed decision-making circumstances from whatever cause), innovation and creativity, and political acceptability, with particular emphasis on the desirability of

<sup>(19)</sup> Sarley (1972), nominates thirty-three, which he concedes is not an exhaustive list even at the date of its compilation.

<sup>(20)</sup> Van de Ven and Delbecq (1972), p. 11.

minimising the status and other distinctions between the participant reference groups. For Van de Ven and Delbecq, the participation of 'external' reference groups "enhances the perceived legitimacy" of the decision.<sup>(21)</sup>

#### *Operational Processes*

In order to achieve a measure of validation to the methodology of plan-making processes, a brief review is made of a number of situations for which a process has been devised, and in which opportunities for public involvement have been differentially provided. The range of operational models to be considered includes (a) the advisory network published by DOE (1971); (b) a selection from the Boyce, Day, McDonald (1970) compendium of case studies; (c) a sub-regional plan (South Hampshire T.U., 1973), and (d) the general process of development control (McLoughlin, 1973).

(a) *Management networks* (DOE, 1971). Although not strictly an operational process, the activity sequence described by DOE serves as a model likely to be adopted (possibly without serious modification) by many British planning authorities in their preparation of a structure plan. The handbook records that "inevitably, the process of preparing such a plan will be a complex operation stringing together the activities not only of other departments of the planning authorities but also those of other authorities, members and groups of the public and government departments."<sup>(22)</sup> Intended as a graphic rationalisation of an inherently complex process, the model identifies the sequence of activities, the decisions required; it traces the inter-relationships and identifies the principal participants at each phase. The handbook is a companion volume to the Development Plans Manual (DOE, 1970) and should be considered within the obligatory and discretionary context of contemporary British planning legislation. As is usual with quasi-official publications, the handbook draws attention to the constraints on the deployment of the network with particular regard to the peculiarities of each planning situation, and

<sup>(21)</sup> The matters of legitimacy and 'ego-involvement' are reported extensively in the bibliography of the Van de Ven-Delbecq paper.

<sup>(22)</sup> DOE (1971), p. 1.

the opportunities afforded by continuous advances in the state of planning theory; in addition, it draws attention to the severe parameters appropriate to all plan-making situations, parameters which significantly circumscribe the operation of citizen participation programmes—"the practical limitations imposed by time, cost, equipment and skill."<sup>(23)</sup> The parties to participation are identified, embracing appropriate public authorities, statutory bodies, other tiers of government, *ad hoc* steering groups, and the public.

The handbook describes and discusses both the simplified nine-step process and the comprehensive process of 107 listed activities (Fig. 3.3). The opportunities for public involvement are identified in the appropriate strata of the process; a restricted number are nominated expressly, but there are implied opportunities at other points of the process—unless the public is required to adopt a state of informed suspended animation between the explicit opportunities for involvement. It is necessary to believe that other opportunities exist, otherwise there is a distinct discrepancy between the Skeffington (1969) guidelines,<sup>(24)</sup> the Development Plans manual (1970) description of participation,<sup>(25)</sup> and the brief schedule of five participant activities expressed in the model. If the postulated network is to be interpreted at face value, there is no invitation to the public to assist with the formulation of aims, there is a clear proposition that the local planning authority determines the available plan options and nominates a preferred solution *before* inviting the public to make representations. There is little to criticise in the process as a management network, but the opportunities it affords the public to participate in plan-making are negligible. The reasons for this must remain conjectural.

(b) *Metropolitan scale plan-making processes* (U.S.A.) In the review of thirteen operational processes in the United States (Boyce *et al.*, 1970), significant differences in the adopted methodologies were

<sup>(23)</sup> DOE (1971), p. 4.

<sup>(24)</sup> Skeffington (1969), para. 5: "The act of *sharing* in the formulation of policies and proposals." But, see para. 37.

<sup>(25)</sup> HMSO (1970), p. 97: "expression of views and collaboration by the public in the processes that lead to the formulation of aims, policies proposals in a structure or local plan".

exposed. The purpose of the review was to explore the phase of alternative plan generation, and amongst the contributory reasons for this approach cited by Boyce, Day and McDonald were a number pertinent to the concerns of citizen participation. These reasons were; firstly, that the need to develop alternative plan solutions would ensure a useful interaction of professional, public and political groups;<sup>(26)</sup> secondly, that the public would be motivated to consider future life-styles, and to attach values to pertinent matters;<sup>(27)</sup> and thirdly, that public and the elected representatives would be trapped into an educational process from which they would increase their appreciation of the process and value-implications of planning *per se*.<sup>(28)</sup> From the introductory commentary on the composition of the process, it becomes clear that the authors consider the operations of planning to be iterative and incremental, and that the ongoing decision-making process may be efficiently conducted "on the basis of co-operative decisions and joint action by conflicting groups" with "the distribution of control and participation among various types and levels of government, private interests, and institutions".<sup>(29)</sup> Thus, Boyce and his co-authors view the plan-making process within a pervading context of participation by many actors. Plan evaluation has been recognised as both implicit and explicit; the implicit form (which is primarily technical, and which is essentially the domain of technical and professional staff, and quasi-political *ad hoc* committees) is almost without external participation, whereas the explicit form (in which the more general and political issues are amenable to lay discussion and comment) is undeniably participationist.

Seven studies were isolated and exposed by Boyce and his co-authors for detailed examination. Of these, four contribute little to the study of participation practices involving the public;<sup>(30)</sup> the other

<sup>(26)</sup> Boyce *et al.* (1970), p. 2.

<sup>(27)</sup> Boyce *et al.* (1970), p. 31.

<sup>(28)</sup> Boyce *et al.* (1970), p. 31.

<sup>(29)</sup> Boyce *et al.* (1970), p. 10.

<sup>(30)</sup> These are Baltimore ("external evaluation was more or less non-existent until the closing stages", p. 167). Boston ("public evaluation appears to have been almost non-existent... The study has been viewed as a professional task", p. 212). New York (there was a "belief that public interest was not great enough", p. 391). and Philadelphia (on the matter of public participation "there is nothing to report", p. 419).

three—Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis-St. Paul—reveal useful indicators of the extent to which planning practice in the United States is prepared to accommodate meaningful strategies of public involvement. The observations which follow are based on the analysis of these three studies.

In each of the three studies there is clear evidence of the impact of outside (i.e. public) opinion, information and attempts of coercion on the plan-making exercise, and particularly upon the planning staff: this impact, was not, however, consistent in respect of intensity, time and duration, or of decision-making level. There was a coincidence in the sequence of opportunities for 'external' involvement, which may be summarised chronologically as follows:

1. The attitudes of the citizens, and their goal statements were sought at one of the earliest phases of the process, and were used to structure the process (for example, Chicago, p. 246).<sup>(31)</sup>
2. The information collection and collation operations were contributed to by external participants, who pursued the matters through to late policy stages (for example, Minneapolis-St. Paul, p. 354).
3. The publication of technical reports for public review and study: these reports contained either survey information or notes on proposals and policies. (Significant use was made by the three agencies of popular communication devices; for example, Milwaukee prided itself on the calibre of its documentation for public consumption, while Minneapolis-St. Paul produced both a simplified development guide and a film to assist the education programme.)
4. The holding of public meetings ('hearings'), both in the form of informal gatherings and as formal local conferences; the purposes of these were to achieve refinement of the matters and to define clear recommendations as a result of "openly arriving at agreement" (Milwaukee, p. 318), with or without the use of the "standard interrogation" questionnaire system (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Chicago).

<sup>(31)</sup> Pages on case studies from Boyce *et al.* (1970) are cited to support the contentions made.

5. The holding of seminars, with discussions by expert panels (Minneapolis-St. Paul).
6. The continuous review and refinement of alternatives, with community preference expressions being given due weight, leading to the publication of a consensus-managed preferred plan.<sup>(32)</sup>

The Chicago programme was conceived in three phases; the first was *initiation*, which involved preparatory work on publications and the development of an organisation to accommodate citizen participation; the second was *dialogue*, a continuing process of premeditated, serious and valid exchanges between all participants to the plan-making operation; and finally, *feedback*, the response of participants at critical stages in the ongoing process of decision-making.

Figure 3.4 illustrates, in a simplified form, the processes of Chicago, and Minneapolis-St. Paul.

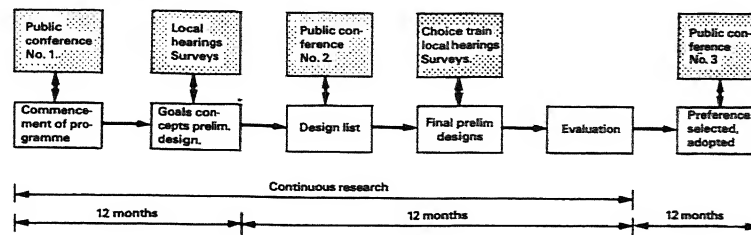
(c) *A sub-regional process (Britain). The South Hampshire Draft Structure Plan* (1973) was the product of three years of data collection, modelling, forecasting, evaluation and public consultation by a specially created planning agency, the South Hampshire Plan Technical Unit. The guiding political body, the Advisory Committee, adopted the general principles of the Skeffington Report (1969) (see Chapter 6) as the basis for public involvement in the preparation of the structure plan, and set key stages in the process for overt participation whilst advocating a continuous dialogue between itself, technical planners, and all manner of interested parties.

The process adopted for the preparation of the plan was composed of six phases (Fig. 3.4); (1) the identification of problems and opportunities in the subregion; (2) the development and expression of aims to give direction to the plan; (3) the refinement of (2) into operationalised objectives and planning criteria; (4) the development of alternative solutions; (5) the systematic evaluation of the alternatives; (6) the development of a preferred plan. An early decision in the process facilitated a continuous public monitoring of the activities in the process. This decision was to create a number of 'umbrella' represen-

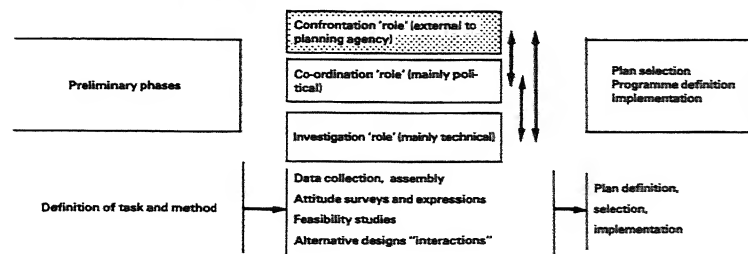
<sup>(32)</sup> Boyce *et al.* (1970); "Since some of these modifications were eventually incorporated and other suggestions were at least examined, we have here very concrete evidence of the review process fulfilling a valuable function." (p. 318).



## 4a. Chicago (simplified)



## 4b. Minneapolis - St. Paul (simplified)



## 4c. South Hampshire

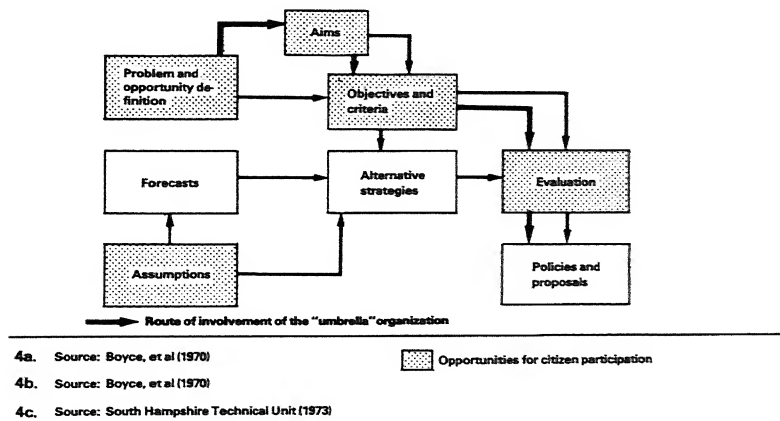


Fig. 3.4. Three simplified operationalised processes.

tative organs, consisting of representatives from the organisations wishing to be involved in the decision process. In addition, a number of voluntary study groups were established under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association. These bases of formal participation, and the inputs from responses to questionnaire surveys facilitated an almost continuous stream of involvement. A claim has been made that the participation programme achieved significant advances in the public awareness of the concepts and operations of planning.<sup>(33)</sup>

(d) *Participation in the process of development control.* In his review of development control practices, McLoughlin (1973) has described and commented upon what he refers to as 'the route of a case', or the process through which an application for development passes from receipt through to the decision being recorded. Experience of the process varies between those (British) planning agencies with powers to assess such applications, but there is a reasonable degree of similarity in the critical administrative and technical procedures certainly to permit the drawing of a common 'route' network (Fig. 3.5).

The first phase is essentially concerned with administrative operations conducted within the planning office, to which the applicant may contribute further information if asked to do so; there is little citizen participation here, except for 'leaks', if the development application is sensitive. Phase two affords the first opportunity for public involvement: it occurs in those cases, stipulated by statutory regulations, which require public advertisement. It is necessary however for the public to be avid readers of the public notices columns in local newspapers to be aware that possibly contentious matters are before the Council. The third phase may prove to be the most protracted, because it may involve very comprehensive consultations within the planning authority, with statutory bodies and other government (local and/or national) departments. This phase, largely exclusive of public witness, is concerned with the ascertainment of

<sup>(33)</sup> *Public Participation in the South Hampshire Plan: Its Extent and Effectiveness.* South Hampshire Plan Technical Unit Report to the Advisory Committee (undated). Winchester.

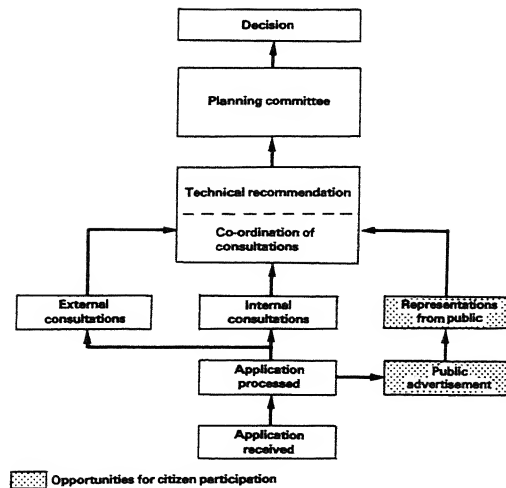


Fig. 3.5. Development control process (based on McLoughlin (1973), pp. 88-89).

facts, interpretations, opinions and advice from a variety of sources. If the subject of the application required advertisement, the results of any public input will be coordinated with the outcomes of other (mainly technical) consultations. The full spectrum of the consultations is determined by a combination of precedents (either to the situation, or to the site location) and the predisposition of the person responsible for considering the application. Phase four is concerned with the consideration of the consultations and the drafting of recommendations. As with most other aspects of the development control process, the considerations are particularly technical, and therefore (possibly of necessity) 'internal' to the conventional contributing forum. The final phase is the representational one, in which the recommendations are considered by the elected representatives, and may be construed as perhaps the vital participationist activity. Some planning authorities have a process which incorporates an 'overseeing' role by interested elected members, most often including the chairman of the planning committee and a few senior members, which operates either throughout the consideration process, or which

pre-empts the formal decision-taking at phase five. In a few cases, planning authorities have delegated responsibility for decision-making to the chairman of committee and to named senior officials. These, and similar arrangements, are advocated in the interests of greater efficiency—to quicken the pace of decision-making, to reserve to officials matters of purely technical concern—but their operation effectively neutralises the possibility of citizen participation.

Thus, in a simple process extending through five phases, the opportunities for public involvement are not infrequently limited to those the planning authority is charged by statute to observe (e.g. in advertisement), or to those determined by the planning committee.

#### FRAMEWORKS OF PARTICIPATION

A second aspect of the structuring of citizen participation is the translation of the points identified in the planning process into meaningful activities. This has been done by a number of political commentators (e.g. Milbrath, 1965; Arnstein, 1969) who have developed a variety of typologies, registering participation in a hierarchical form. Two interpretations of these typologies are possible; firstly, there is the subjective interpretation of participant action as that *tolerated* by the plan-making agency or institution; secondly, there is a straightforward reference of the degree of involvement *accepted* by the participant. It is probably still true to report that, despite the recent flirtation with the procedures for decision-making from management and applied science, most decisions in planning are reached by the conventional and 'political' means of compromise, consensus-formation and conflict resolution. The mechanisms of community conflict resolution are traditionally highly charged with emotion, rhetoric and polemics, misconceptions and euphemisms. It is the attempt to overcome these inherent problem areas that has led to the exploration of decision-making aids used with conspicuous success in areas lacking the behavioural variables of community decision-making. Kramer (1969), has distinguished between three types of mechanism operating in the United States social welfare programmes. He distinguishes (a) the *debate*, which is characterised by

the exercise of reason, expertise, persuasion, leading to consensus formation if not general agreement; (b) the *game*, in which the protagonists develop 'campaigns' to resolve differences by quantitative support, not shying from overt bargaining, from the threat of sanctions, and similar means of persuasion; (c) the *fight*, which is an exercise in which only one protagonist can prevail, and in which the contest is characterised by coercion and threats.

It has been suggested that "the typical action environment is tense and charged with conflict", and that this situation behoves each participant to the decision-making process "to learn to live with conflict, to accept conflict as inevitable, and to exploit conflicting forces for constructive action" (Friedmann, 1969).<sup>(34)</sup> If this is a true description of the environment of decision-making, then it becomes obvious that participants will rarely have their cause prevail without amendment, and that to have that cause accepted in any form, there will be a need to bargain, to compromise, and to learn to accept defeat without loss of morale. No participant can afford to overlook his *de facto* effect on the balance of power, but in order to be able to cope effectively, each participant requires knowledge of political processes, the bases of power, and the art (and acts) of persuasion. This requirement of acute political perceptiveness has been described in some detail (Rabinovitz, 1968), and has been formalised into a 'social guidance system' (Friedmann, 1969) to accommodate the necessary prescriptions of control and direction.<sup>(35)</sup>

Friedmann's concept of the 'social guidance system' is a useful context from which to draw attention to the essentially contentious nature of participation practices; the potential dichotomy in the decision-making environment is clear. One of the purposes of Arnstein's (1969) description was to reveal the dichotomy between the 'empty ritual' and the laws of real power, and their relative impacts on decision outcomes.

Palpable naivety is manifest from most participants in power-sharing activities, either expecting rationality from participants to whose nature such behaviour is unnatural, or expecting decisions to be ex-

<sup>(34)</sup> Friedmann (1969), p. 317.

<sup>(35)</sup> These matters are comprehensively treated in the literature of, for example, Lindblom (1965), Etzioni (1968).

cuted in an unconstrained political context, or expecting participation and effectiveness to be of equal weight, and so on. To set the context, two different aspects of the matter are briefly described. The first is Arnstein's 'ladder' concept, which was drawn provocatively; the ladder graphically identifies participant status and comments upon the associated effectiveness of each rung. A less provocative, but as perceptive concept is Milbrath's (1965) hierarchy of political involvement. The two concepts are neither complementary, nor coincident; they are neither exclusive nor necessarily comprehensive. It would be true, also, to suggest that, other than their particular usefulness from which to develop discussion on the meaning of participation, these two concepts are not necessarily more significant than others to which brief consideration is given towards the end of this chapter.

To properly set the context, it is perhaps timely to be reminded that "participation is an addition to, not a substitute for, professional planning",<sup>(36)</sup> i.e. the public's role is complementary to those of the planning expert and the responsible politician.

#### *The Ladder Concept*

Arnstein's (1969) typology of eight rungs on a ladder is renowned, and a source of persistent reference; it is only necessary to make brief mention of it here. The ladder was devised and described in a particularly provocative manner to encourage a more enlightened and rational debate on the theory, purpose and practice of citizen participation in decision-making. Arnstein's areas of reference were three United States' federal social welfare programmes concerned with urban renewal, anti-poverty and model cities. Each rung of the ladder was drawn to correspond with the opportunity afforded to influence plans or policies. In sharp contrast to the more euphemistic descriptions of many other analysts of participation structures, Arnstein purposely categorises citizen participation as citizen power, in so doing revealing the central issue of the participation debate, viz. the *locus operandi* of power to bring about or to forestall change. The Janus attitude of governing cliques is exposed in Arnstein's pre-

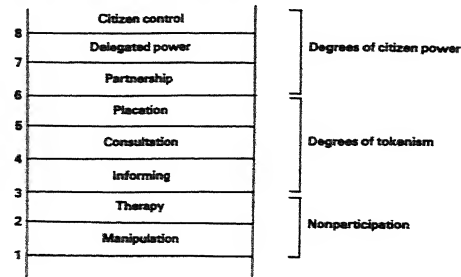
<sup>(36)</sup> Burns (1968). The New Planning System. the Public and the Architect. *Architect's Journal*, 4 December 1968, p. 1309.

amble; however, in the United States' context, as probably in no other, the implications for the redistribution of power consequent upon the increased levels of citizen participation in policy and plan-making generate lobbies of activists and reactionaries drawn on racial, ethnic, ideological and political lines, so that the potential for uncontrollable hostility between the respective protagonists is high. It is this potential for disturbance that forms the substance of the extreme élitist argument.

The ladder's eight rungs are grouped into three generalised grades of participation effectiveness (Fig. 3.6). In the grade of least effectiveness—*non-participation*—there are two rungs; (1) *manipulation* and (2) *therapy*. Operations at this level are described by Arnstein as distortions of participation, illusory, dishonest and arrogant, because their significance to decision outcomes is scarcely measurable. The technique of the first two rungs is to loosely inform the citizenry of possible future action and to subsequently tacitly assume citizen support because of the lack of substantial opposition (which has been brought about by default). Rungs three to five are described as *degrees of tokenism*. In this second grade, the terms (3) *informing*, (4) *consultation* and (5) *placation* are used to describe increased levels of potential involvement, the parameters of which are drawn by the paternalistic power élite. Practices in these levels are possibly the most common, not only because of the inherent mysticism of the self-endowed propensity to govern by the politicians and élitist professional advisors, but also because such activities may be controlled by the governing body to the extent that significant shifts in the power structure can be avoided. The final three rungs, (6) *partnership*, (7) *delegated power* and (8) *citizen control* conote increasing levels of a revolutionary transformation of the prevailing conservative power pyramid. These *degrees of citizen power* encompass a redistribution of power, at the most amicable level by negotiation, subsequent exchanges of power significance being achieved by assumption rather than formal delegation.

The concept's author has conceded some of the limitations of the starkly drawn ladder, particularly in the juxtaposition of the poles of power. It appears the steep gradient of the location of power between the poles has been drawn deliberately to highlight the funda-

## 6a. Ladder of citizen participation



## 6b. Hierarchy of political involvement



Fig. 3.6. Ladder of citizen participation and hierarchy of political involvement (a): based on Arnstein (1969); (b): based on Milbrath (1965).

mental divisions, although Arnstein concedes "in the real world of people and programmes there might be 150 rungs with less sharp and 'pure' distinction among them".<sup>(37)</sup> The simplistic ladder frame-

<sup>(37)</sup> Arnstein (1969), p. 217.



work ignores, on the one hand the inherent resistance to power redistribution and the paternalism of the governing body and its constituent members who assume the aura of a mystical right to rule, and on the other hand the inadequate knowledge-base and organisational potential of the aspiring participants.<sup>(38)</sup> Of perhaps more significance in the critical analysis of the ladder concept is the restricted operational base from which the indictments have been postulated. In a comprehensive review of the participation requirements across the broad spectrum of United States' federal social welfare activity, Mogulof (1970) develops a different categorisation of practices. The point to be made is that there is not one consistent policy towards public involvement; the reason for the proliferation of policies is conjectural, but the effect is that it is probably unreasonable to isolate policies that are not consistent and then make prescriptive assertions of claimed general applicability. Thus, although the concept is a useful and provocative key to participation practice, it should not be considered the only valid interpretation of even the United States' process of involving the public in decision-making.

#### *Hierarchy of Political Involvement*

While Arnstein concentrated on the institutional paternalistic performance constraints on public involvement, Milbrath (1965) concentrated on the anthropocentric behaviour patterns of individuals aspiring to participate in political activity. In his ranked "repertoire of political acts" Milbrath considers there to be a perceptible and increasing commitment of time, energy and money in the progression from the lowest to the highest level of activity, and he has based his translation on research into the proportion of the adult population actively engaged in political activity<sup>(39)</sup> (Fig. 3.6).

The hierarchy has an internal logic of political involvement, increasing from the more to the less frequent political behaviour. In practice there is unlikely to be such a smooth progression; rather, people tend to locate themselves into one of three groups. To illustrate this Milbrath draws an analogy with the gladiatorial spectacles

<sup>(38)</sup> Arnstein concedes this is a serious deficiency in her framework (p. 217).

<sup>(39)</sup> For example, Campbell *et al.* (1960); Lane (1959).

of bygone eras. The lowest order of participant is described as the *apathetic*; at this level the political role is totally passive, and there is a general disinterest in the affairs of government and politics. People in this category seldom bother to attend the 'stadium' to witness the spectacle. The second group is involved to a minimal degree in the political process, undertaking conspicuously little more than seeking information, voting, discussing, proselytising and indicating allegiance; yet, in the democratic process, even these activities are theoretically capable of changing the political order. People in this group are the *spectators* who from the stands "cheer, transmit messages of advice and encouragement, and at given periods vote to decide who has won a particular battle (election)".<sup>(40)</sup> A third, and numerically much smaller group, participates in the previously listed activities, but are drawn into, or opt to become more closely involved in the political fray by attending meetings, campaigning, soliciting funds, running for and perhaps holding political office. This group is composed of the *gladiators*, a small band who "battle fiercely to please the spectators, who have the power to decide their fate."<sup>(41)</sup> From research and observation it may be contended that these roles are strikingly stable; there are occasions on which a *gladiator* adopts the role of the *spectator* and *vice versa*, but generally environmental factors ensure that roles are reasonably consistent.<sup>(42)</sup> In a proportional division of the three groups, Milbrath suggests about 33% as *apathetics*, 60% as *spectators*, and not more than 7% as *gladiators*, although perhaps only one or two per cent are manifestly gladiatorial in their activities. Almond and Verba (1965), in their study of political participation in five nations, consider the proportion of *apathetics* to be in excess of one-third of the potential active population.<sup>(43)</sup>

Frameworks for participation should have no operational value. They are merely conceptual formulations drawn to indicate the types of activity in which any citizen can indulge, or the policy-effectuation levels which may be observed in the decision-making power structure.

<sup>(40)</sup> Milbrath (1965), p. 20.

<sup>(41)</sup> Milbrath (1965), p. 20.

<sup>(42)</sup> Brief mention is made of the significance of psycho-social stimuli to and impacts on participation through chaps. 4 and 5.

<sup>(43)</sup> Almond and Verba (1965), chap. 5.

In both cases they should be only of academic interest. However, the definition of potential power and decision-sharing action areas are essential initial steps in the derivation of particularistic planning processes. Of crucial significance is the determination of whether any act or series of actions has been participatory. For example, it is necessary to be aware of the lowest common denominator of meaningful participation. In an attempt to apply linguistic precision to the term 'participation' has been described (*note* not defined) as "the act of sharing in the formulation of policies and proposals".<sup>(44)</sup> This description adds to, rather than eliminates, confusion for it simply uses terms which are themselves capable of misinterpretation, and which contain great scope for political manoeuvre and manipulation. A more detailed consideration of the Report's context, contents and conclusions is reserved to Chapter 6. There needs to be consensus on the datum point of participation. Arnstein, as do many other researchers and community activists of a radical persuasion, fails to nominate the minimum activity in the power-sharing spectrum that might be conceded to be the datum-point of participation. Milbrath nominates "exposing oneself to political stimuli"<sup>(45)</sup> as the lowest order of involvement, although he does not clarify whether that exposure needs to be both conscious and deliberate. From that base-point the opportunities for positive popular participation are likely to be prescribed by the prevailing political culture.

Arnstein and Milbrath have by no means been the only researchers to investigate the structure of participation. There are numerous studies of this problem and most of them have United States origins, related particularly to economic opportunity or urban renewal programmes. In recent years, as the prescription for more meaningful public inputs to the decision process has attained political currency, the range and subject significance of studies has increased, although there is an alarming tendency for planners from many different political and cultural systems to ape American experiments. A sample of further, and perhaps lesser known investigations into participatory frameworks, is briefly commented upon for comparison with those of Arnstein and Milbrath.

<sup>(44)</sup> Skeffington (1969), para. 5a.

<sup>(45)</sup> Milbrath (1965), p. 22.

In a review, Spiegel and Mittenenthal (1968) nominated a framework composed of seven elements: information, consultation, negotiation, shared policy and decision-making, joint planning, delegation of planning responsibility and neighbourhood control. The Oakland Task Force specified a more narrow continuum of participation ranging in intensity from employment, through dialogue and influence, to control. Using as his reference the Community Action Agencies of the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), Austin<sup>(46)</sup> defined eight components of a participation framework: the organisation of advisory committees; the holding of a series of open community hearings and conferences; community sociotherapy; union of service consumers; a community corporation through which the neighbourhood would directly control the provision of community services; the development of political skills and organisations among citizens; a coalition of action groups; urban community based or small self-contained, self-maintaining, self-directing neighbourhoods. A common denominator to these three frameworks, and to most others, is the differential of intensity (and meaningfulness) of the distribution of power, with the least intensity at 'informing' levels and the greatest at 'local control' levels. Mogulof (1970) has attempted to define a structure using the intensity variance implications and relating them to "patterns of agency policy". Thus, four measures of intensity (from 'least' to 'most' intense) are defined: (1) employment-information, (2) dialogue-advice-giving, (3) shared authority, and (4) control. In addition, four patterns of policy towards participation practices are identified: (a) no-policy, (b) programmes requiring public involvement without specification, (c) programmes as (b), but specifying an advisory body of citizens, and (d) programmes requiring participation structures capable of continuously maintaining and coping with an extensive range of governmental matters requiring political decisions. Mogulof's proposition is that there is a definite relationship between the intensity of participation and the prescribed patterns of decision-making; in simple terms this means that where there exists a legislative mandate for public involvement there will exist continuous pressure from the citizenry for opportuni-

<sup>(46)</sup> Cited in Mogulof (1970).

ties to participate. This situation, prevailing for many years in United States federal welfare programmes, has been introduced into a British planning system as yet generally incapable of coping with the responsibility. Inadequate preparation for the effect of the intensity-pattern model relationship on the part of different levels of government, politicians, the professions, and the public will almost inevitably produce unsatisfactory results.

#### *Modes of Participation*

The modes of participation vary according to the existence of opportunity and whether such opportunities are formal or informal, to the interests and resourcefulness of the aspiring participants, and to the prevailing societal attitudes towards institutional decision-making. To be valid, participation must involve positive and conscious action; mere membership of society, or an interest in politics with or without allegiance to a particular party or political philosophy does not in itself constitute participation. However, any action which involves the application of an individual's discretion and which results in the determination of a policy or the commitment of a decision probably comprises the lowest common denominator of participation. This interpretation encompasses the situation in which the participant is party to a decision but in which he or she does not commit the final decision-making act (i.e. ascriptive participation). It is necessary for all participants to realise that most decisions in planning, and perhaps in general, are hierarchical; the broad policy decisions, and even the consideration of 'broad' details of which the public is competent to make judgement, are but points on a scale composed of greater and lesser decisions.

"It is only by establishing precisely how decisions—or kinds of decisions—are reached that one can assess the nature of actual participation and the degree of realism of those who aspire to increase it. 'Ought' implies 'can', and 'who' participates and 'how' is a precondition of discovering who else might participate and how".<sup>(47)</sup> Besides these preliminary complications, it is necessary to be aware that the stages of potential participation are most often unequal in oppor-

<sup>(47)</sup> Parry (1972), p. 6.

tunity, duration, effect, scope and interest; and to further complicate the matter, the process of decision-making is so composed of compromise and the recycling of considerations that it requires both intellectual and physical stamina of a high order on the part of any aspiring participant. As most citizens are engrossed in a diversity of leisure pursuits, each competing for conscious attention, there is an inescapable tendency for the citizen commitment and participation to be irregular and, to some extent, inadequate. In such situations there is a clear need for the citizen's interests to be shepherded by suitable professional advice, i.e. by advocacy planners.

In some instances, consultation of the public by institutional bodies is a matter of mere constitutional propriety; this will be so where, at various points in the decision process the capacity to 'make' decisions democratically has been prejudiced or devalued by previous commitments, entered into in 'in-camera' sessions, or some other form(s) of political intrigue.<sup>(48)</sup> Another of the almost intractable dilemmas of participation is the inevitable role-switching which occurs throughout the decision process; from critic, to proponent, to analyst, to strategist, to expert, to mediator and so on. Each role may be performed by a single person at different stages of the lengthy and complex decision process; indeed, the most successful politicians are adept at this manoeuvring which facilitates the maintenance of their position of influence. The relative 'weight' of a participant significantly affects the outcome of his contribution, and his 'political pedigree' is of considerable importance (see Chapters 4 and 5).

The reasons for deliberate participant inaction are often as important to understand as those motivating participation; for example, the conscious denial of support to a matter may arise because of the likelihood of the development of difficult interpersonal relations with one of the other prominent parties. Alternatively, the withdrawal of contentious views may attract desired compensation. It is incumbent upon the student of participation to be aware of this 'other face' of participation, in which conflict is minimised, or remains latent (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, 1970; Parry, 1969). These matters are further considered in the final chapters.

<sup>(48)</sup> Levin (1973)—see footnote (6).

Political participation is a multifaceted activity. Not only are there many roles and many degrees of involvement, but participation in the formulation and implementation of policy is a prolonged and exhausting activity. More is required than a mark on a ballot paper: more is needed than a single syllable response to a questionnaire. By its diverse nature, the gamut of participation opportunities require a variety of specialist skills extending from the recording of a vote by a symbol, to the ability to rationally and constructively comment on proposals and policies and proffer valid alternatives and counter arguments. Literature on political organisation recurrently points out that as society becomes more politically complex, the role of the intelligent amateur becomes increasingly restricted. Modern society is too complex, and the expertise levels required are too great for the general participation opportunities available to the ancient Athenians to be possible now. Most advocates of the extension of popular participation acknowledge that there are these expertise constraints (Skeffington, 1969). For example, in Athenian democracy, many offices were filled by lot, on the presumption that all citizens were equally qualified to hold office; but there were some strategic offices which demanded special attributes, and these were filled by election from a list of 'suitable' candidates. In modern society the spectrum has shifted only to the extent that (a) with increased numbers eligible to vote and (b) with specialist skills in short supply, the lot has been replaced by the election, and the election by the appointment. Thus, although the number of potential participants has increased, the opportunities for direct participation have decreased.

The opportunities for participation are largely dictated by the style of decision-making system, and Faludi (1973) in his examination of particular plan-making process styles has disclosed a crucial dilemma; he has observed that it is seldom revealed (possibly because it is not fully appreciated) which of the alternative possible plan-making processes is being used, and it is in this uncertainty that the political manipulator may use the knowledge-vacuum to foster or to neutralise public involvement in accordance with his own preferences. Rabinovitz's (1968) study has reported on the opportunities for this manipulation that may exist.

Modern theories of democracy tend to emphasize accountability of the elected representatives rather than maximum popular participation; this situation lends support to the arguments of the élitists, which question the abilities of the public to participate at all in a meaningful way. It is to an identification of the main participant groups, and to an examination of their strengths and weaknesses that attention is directed in the next two chapters.

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## CHAPTER 4

### Participants in the Planning Process—an Overview

In this chapter and the one which follows an attempt is made to identify the potential participants and participant groups to the process of plan-making, to describe their characteristics, motivations, competences, preferences, and to further examine the contribution of each, that is individually and collectively, to what has been considered as the basic requirement of participatory democracy, namely social co-operative behaviour. This further examination sets three criteria for the meaningful exercise of participation, each of which has been explored in depth in original sources, but which are mentioned briefly here to establish a framework for the discussion which follows. Calhoun (1971), in his examination of the human element in democratic processes, has ventured the opinion that there might be little justification for persisting with the idea of participatory democracy, because, the record of history has little evidence of the co-operative behaviour required, because there is little in the psycho-social composition of the human being to foster the co-operative spirit even if the institutional frameworks and mechanisms were to be conducive to it, and because man's record reveals "a sort of precarious antagonistic co-operation" which might be indicative that "participatory democracy is beyond 'human nature'."<sup>(1)</sup> The second of the three dimensions or criteria has been described by Edelman (1964). It is noticeable that participation in decision-making by those unaccustomed to it responds to a graph description that rises steeply to an early peak, is sustained momentarily, and then descends almost as steeply. Edelman has observed that participation by the inexper-

<sup>(1)</sup> Calhoun (1971), p. 27.

experienced frequently takes the form of fervent displays of anger, or indignation, or on particular occasions, enthusiasm; the nature of the 'public's' expression is significantly dictated by the situation, for example when particularly vulnerable sections of the community seem to be threatened by action proposed by government or a large commercial caucus supported by government, or when such sections seem to have achieved a significant victory over the prejudices or vascillations of the bureaucracy. The temporary euphoria and energy typical of the early phases of decision-making programmes is as common and predictable as the lapse of interest, support or commendation in the later phases. Needless to say, there are a variety of considerations which would influence the gradient on both sides of the curve. Finally, to provide the third criterion, reference may be made to Rourke's (1969) insistence that ultimately, the principal and fundamental source of power is the ability of the cause or the issue that is the subject of the participatory exercise to attract and maintain outside support. Rourke's particular concern is with the support necessary to sustain the operations of administrative agencies, but the principle is of no less validity for the interests within the community which emerge in an identifiable form as a 'society' or 'group', and whose success will be largely determined by the extent to which they can attract and manifestly mobilise support from outside the ranks of those whose interests are vitally affected.

These are the three guidelines for the critical analysis of the participants described in this chapter: the ability of the participants,

1. to effectively co-operate;
2. to maintain their own interest throughout the 'action'; and
3. to develop, mobilise and sustain a volume of 'outside' support throughout the 'action'.

The profusion of power-revealing studies, mostly reporting the United States political context, has done little to develop a power distribution theory of universal applicability. In most of the situations described there appear to be peculiarities which effectively frustrate the postulation of a total theory of general relevance (see, for example, Dahl, 1961; Lowry, 1962; Hunter, 1953; Jennings, 1964; Alford, 1969; Hampton, 1970; Dennis, 1970; Agger *et al.*, 1964; Wild,

1974). Fortunately, the studies have a common denominator, in that the most frequent level of examination is that of local government. The issues of national government attract a different type of political analyst, and seem to occupy the attention of the 'average' citizen only at the times of election, national or international crisis or disaster. Such routine matters of national government are judged to be too remote from the everyday experience of the citizenry to stimulate much concern and attention.<sup>(2)</sup> The matters of concern to the citizenry are filtered and disseminated by the various branches of the media and it is this conspicuous ease of gleaming snippets of information that may dissuade some potential activists from seeking a more dynamic role in decision-making simply to acquire information. Thus, the environment outside the arena of decision-making contributes to the creation of a gap between the decision-maker, and those for whom (and on whose behalf) the decisions are made. Not infrequently, this gap alienates sympathy and respect between the two groups. If to this alienation is added the hypothesis of Calhoun (that potential parties to decision-making are differentially motivated, competent, and capable of behaving rationally and co-operationally), then the most scientific decision-forming techniques would become inoperable because of the behavioural variables contributing to the decision-making context and arena.

It is at the local level of operations that the diversity of motivation, aspiration and competence among the possible participants is most easily perceived; but, even at this level, the penetration to the crucial manipulations of the power game is seldom fully achievable. However, in so far as urban and regional planning is concerned, it is at the local level that most of the possible participants are able to appreciate many of the intricacies of policy-making, policy application, and the translation of policies into lines on a plan. Hill (1970) refutes the not infrequent contention of politicians and the national bureaucracy that the local level is insignificant in terms of decision-making; the impacts of political party allegiance, personal levels of affluence, and centralised welfare provisions on the motivation to

<sup>(2)</sup> There are other factors which contribute to the display of lack of interest in national politicking, such as the impact of the media, the charisma of the leadership, and so on.

participate in local affairs are imperfectly known. In urban and regional planning, it is the local level that is of potential appeal to unaccustomed decision-makers, because the matters of significance are neither too trivial to be of interest, nor too remote to be within the orbit of influence. It is at the local level, therefore, that the ideals and processes of democracy may be most meaningfully expressed and operationalised. Despite this, there is for many of the public, a mystique surrounding the operations of decision-making and the execution of policies; even the most diligent and concerned citizen, and the most diligent researcher, experiences difficulty in establishing with precision 'who', or which 'area of administration' is responsible for particular recommendations, decisions or operations.

#### *The Location of Power*

There appears to be a lack of unanimity amongst political commentators on the possibility of an equal distribution of power between participants to decision-making. Dahl (1961) attempted to expose the real locus of power in his study of decision-making in a New England town; he predicted a dilemma, which he sought to solve, that there was a basis for inevitable conflict because of the differential distribution of intellectual, social and economic capacities between the possible participants, and because this diversity of competence and motivation was probably incompatible with the fundamentals of the democratic credo. His study posed a number of questions pertinent to the theme of this book: How are important political decisions made? What types of people have the most significant influence on decisions? What is the consistency of their influence? From which strata of society do these influentials derive? Is the leadership cohesive or pluralistic? What is the most effective means of popular participation? Are the patterns of influence consistent? What does the mass public believe to be the democratic creed, and how concerned is it about the practical translation?

Cumulatively, these questions, and many similar to those posed by scholars previously cited, seek to identify the locus of power in the decision-making structure at the local level. In the search, the principal participants are revealed and described, without any asser-

tions made of the general applicability of their status in the situations researched.

Before turning to the more broadly-based critical examination of the participants, it might help to briefly identify the groups composed for the subsequent examination, and some of the psycho-social dimensions of the participants. To conclude this chapter some consideration is given to the media which has a particular function to fulfil in the democratic process.

#### *The Participants: an Overview*

In an emotive plea for an 'effective society' Brown (1968) suggests the ideal democratic order presupposes full participation of all members of the community. This interpretation is refuted by Verba (1969) who has observed that participatory democracy is not and cannot be all-embracing: "no society is run on the basis of equal participation by all citizens."<sup>(3)</sup> The romantic notion of Brown is refuted by the social development recorded in human history, such development having been pursued by means of the imprecise rules of specialisation and the division of labour. Milbrath (1965), as was reported earlier, has perceived the divisions within the community as analogous to the separation into the roles of spectator and gladiator. Unfortunately, or more precisely, disastrously for the purposes of defining meaningful participation techniques, the act of participating seems to be variously interpreted along a continuum from environment-disturbing demonstration to surreptitious persuasion; both of these extremes have quantitative and qualitative dimensions. During the discussion of the participants, both in the immediate brief overview and the later more in-depth study (Chapter 5), an interpretation of 'participation' will be consciously adopted which is more liberal than the descriptions of overt involvement used previously.

In an attempt to define the principal participants, reference has been made to a number of planning process descriptions, and statements of local government structure and relationships. From these, four have been isolated as reasonably representative.

<sup>(3)</sup> Verba (1969), p. 126.

Most simply, Roberts (1974) has defined three participant groups (Fig. 4.1): these are 'the planners', 'the community either directly or through politicians', and 'external factors' such as public or private groups not typically part of the plan-making agency.

Somewhat surprisingly, the guidelines of the Skeffington Report (1969) are of little help in defining the participants. However, in the introductory definitional exercise, there is a hint that the participants are the local planning authority (i.e. the full council), its professional staff, and "the community as an aggregate comprising all individuals and groups within it without limitation".<sup>(4)</sup>

Of considerably greater help is the technical study identifying the management process conceived with the preparation of structure plans under the prevailing British planning system (DOE, 1971). In its accompanying description, the technical memorandum concedes that a significant contribution to the complexity of the preparation of structure plans is the multiplicity of interest and inputs that need to be incorporated, and the challenge this presents to the identification of the most appropriate means to effectively articulate those interests. The defined management network differentiates seven categories of participant (Fig. 4.1): these are:

1. neighbouring (and, therefore, likely to be affected) planning authorities;
2. public bodies, including statutory undertakers (i.e. gas, water, electricity);
3. district councils (where different from (1));
4. the public;
5. the local planning authority (council) and its technical support staff;
6. the group of local planning authorities (i.e. the umbrella organisation supervising the aggregate interests of (1), (3) and (5));
7. national and regional government.

This schedule omits specific reference to the advocacy/consultant participants, but as these act on behalf of client groups already identified in the list, it may be assumed that they are implicitly included.

<sup>(4)</sup> Skeffington (1969), p. 1.

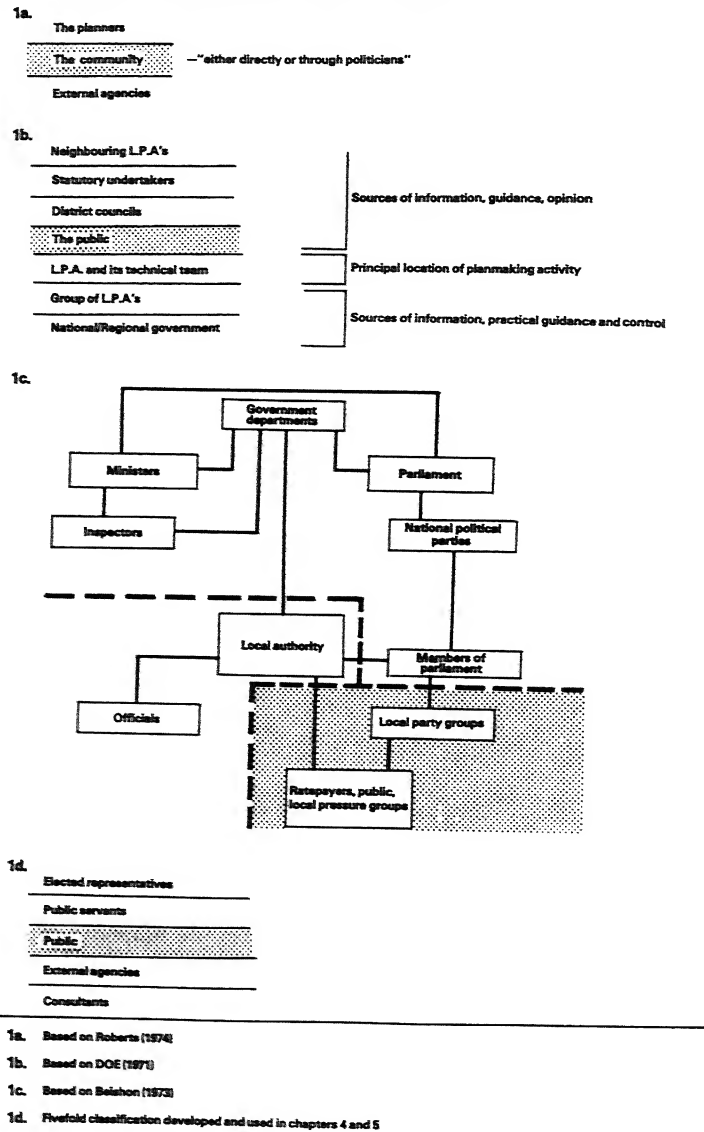


Fig. 4.1. Participant groups in planning.



The environment of interactions of a 'typical' local authority has been defined by Beishon (1973), and he has identified both the dynamic and the passive participant groups (Fig. 4.1). His schedule identifies the local authority (both its political and its administrative branches), the 'external' influences of parliament (its ministers and their inspectors, its members, and government departments), the 'local' public (its pressure groups, representatives). In addition, Beishon nominates the national political parties and the trade unions as significant contributors to decision-making at the local level.<sup>(5)</sup>

Some political commentators (for example, Verba, 1969, 1972) have suggested that political participation or participatory democracy is concerned with action intended to influence the behaviour of the *de facto* decision-makers rather than with the formal power to make decisions. This matter will be explored later in the examination of means of participation (Chapter 7); at the present stage of the thesis presented in this book, the concept is treated as embracing both interpretations, facilitating the identification of all the actors in the decision-making process. From the compendium of roles and participants, five principal groups emerge (Fig. 4.1):

1. *the elected representatives*; these are the politicians, the actors in the local political arena. This group is composed of those members of the community which *expect to be the decision-makers* because of their status, and the traditional role functions;
2. *the public servants*; these are the technical officers, which are expected to, and which *expect to advise* the politicians. This group may assume a more dynamic role if it responds to, or if it generates particular decision-requiring situations (Rabinovitz, 1968);
3. *the public*; this is the heterogenous amalgam of actors, a diversity of behaviours. Three subdivisions of this group are possible, against quantitative criteria;
  - (i) the public *en masse*;
  - (ii) the interest-differentiated 'public';
  - (iii) the public as individuals;

<sup>(5)</sup> For an example of the influence of the trade unions see the report on 'green bans' in Camina (1975).

4. *the external agencies*: these are the bureaucratic or political representatives of 'higher' levels of government, nationwide statutory corporations, other affected (local) government bodies;
5. *the consultants*: these are actors in the process with particular skills and professional competence, which are engaged by any of the other groups to remedy particular skill deficiencies and in order to have a better representation of their arguments.

A more probing examination of these groups of roles will be undertaken later, but it is pertinent here to briefly review some of the important dimensions of each.

The first group, the elected representatives, the councilmen and aldermen, is composed of persons expected to make and who expect to make the decisions that become binding on the remainder of the subject community. It is the potential capacity to assume responsibility and to be in a position to make decisions that has been claimed as one of the prime motivations to seek office. One of the repeated assertions of the Maud Committee (1967) was that the organisation of local government "should be based on the principle that members effectively and collectively control officers, and are politically responsible and accountable to the public".<sup>(6)</sup> These elected members usually readily accept the responsibility for setting the major objectives of the council, of deciding the means of their attainment, and of conducting periodic reviews of progress towards those objectives. The ready acceptance, however, does not necessarily reflect the competence to discharge those responsibilities. The case history of local government performance is littered with instances of councils pursuing decision-making functions in ways which might not contribute to the improved wellbeing of constituents; the conduct of planning has at least its share of such unfortunate occurrences. Of variable significance at the local level is the effect of party politics; in contrast, the influence of central government is considerable. Some actions of local government are strictly regulated by statute or by ministerial directive, and it is in such matters that the elected members are significantly dependent upon the careful advice of the officials.

<sup>(6)</sup> Maud (1967), vol. 1, para. 139, p. 37.

The tasks of the public servants, the bureaucracy, are well documented in the literature of public administration. Almost without exception, the tasks allotted to this group are essentially advisory, although Rabinovitz (1968) has identified situations in which the planner may act out a more dynamic role. Government activity at the local level involves a wide range of matters, from the preparation of major development plans to the emptying of dustbins; the actual work is done by paid officials while the elected members neither physically draw the plans nor tip the dustbins. It is not, however, possible to make universal statements about the relationship between the bureaucracy and the elected members; firstly, some bureaucratic positions are elective, and secondly, even between countries with the identical separation of powers there is a diversity in the degree of delegation by members to the officials. For example, in Britain there is a reluctance to delegate matters which might have political overtones, or which might occur in geographically or subject sensitive areas, whilst in most other European countries a greater degree of delegation is practised on the understanding that the officials will raise the possibly contentious or precedent-forming matters for a determination by the elected members. The extent of delegation everywhere is confused by the variable interpretation that is possible of the 'point' at which policy-making translates to administration, and of the expectation of local democracy. Maud (1967) has suggested that the principal tasks of officials are to advise, to provide the necessary administrative support, and to identify those matters arising from routine transactions which require a political determination. The report recommended that local government should adopt as its guiding principle "that issues are dealt with at the lowest level consistent with the nature of the problem";<sup>(7)</sup> this procedure would inevitably give the bureaucracy a significant, if variable, stake in the decision-making exercise.

For the public to be involved in decision-making there needs to be a diversity of means. This is because 'the public' is such an amorphous and largely intangible 'thing' that there is little possibility of devising a single, universally applicable means of participation. The

<sup>(7)</sup> Maud (1967), vol. 1, para. 132, p. 40.

complications are set in train by the imprecision associated with this group. It is unlikely that the public *en masse* has a satisfactory grasp of pertinent issues to be capable of articulating a sensible consensus, other than in response to invitations to ballot or to complete a referendum proforma. Weissberg (1974) has recently remarked that the differences between citizens in respect of their willingness and appetite to indulge in political activity are acquired, but not genetically acquired. As each member of the mass public becomes politically socialised (normally by experience through the prevailing political culture) some attitudes, skills and behaviours are learned whilst others are experienced and rejected or ignored. It should not be presumed that the learning process is restricted to the pre-adult phase; although this is the period of perhaps greatest personal receptiveness to the process of political socialisation, the acquisition of new behaviour patterns is possible throughout the lifespan of any one individual's willingness to adjust to changed circumstances and new stimuli. It is the variety of personal responses to the process of political socialisation that contributes to the distinction between the heterogeneous ponderous 'mass', and the more lithe and volatile sectional groups. The variety of group interest expression is extreme. For the sake of brevity four major expressions of relevance to urban and regional planning may be noted: those concerned with the natural environment, its aesthetic appearance, its protection and controlled development; those concerned with areas under threat of radical change consequent upon the practical application of planning policies; those concerned with the protection of minority interests, of a communal or spatial nature; those concerned with the guardianship of the democratic credo, and the circumscription of bureaucratic and executive actions. In addition to the fragmentation of the mass into particular groups, the decision-making process needs to accommodate the participation of individuals who feel they have a positive contribution to make, or (more likely) who feel they deserve redress of a grievance. No matter the complexity of the decision-making process in urban and regional planning to accommodate the interaction of the elected members and the paid officials, the process assumes an altogether absurdly complicated form if it is to accommodate in a meaningful (i.e. productive) way, the contributions from

the public *en masse*, or a diversity of specialised groups, or a proliferation of individuals, or a combination of any or all of these.

The participation at the local level of the 'external' group is of two types; firstly, it may be a procedural prescription, or, secondly, it may be a political or administrative courtesy or norm. In the seven-tier scheme identified in the DOE management network for structure plans, the latter of these two types would be evidenced by consultation entered into by the contributory planning authorities, the relevant statutory undertakers, and other public bodies. As a frame of reference relevant central government ministries might also be represented in the consultations.<sup>(8)</sup> Prescriptive participation flows from the range of dependent positions local government holds *vis-à-vis* Parliament and central government. This form of external participation by prescription is more significant than is sometimes realised; although describing the reasonable degree of independence of action conferred on local government by statute and by discretionary delegation, Maud has pointed out that it (i.e. local government) has no purpose other than that permitted by Parliament.<sup>(9)</sup> The committee, in fact, detected a complacency throughout British local government in the almost unchallenged acceptance of the progressive sapping of initiative and its replacement with a plethora of standardised regulations, directions, and omni-locational standards of service. It is often assumed that this external group acts principally in a moderating, consulting capacity, to ensure comprehensive consideration of pertinent matters, and to ensure a compatability between plans in terms of their physical expression and their objectives; but it is necessary to realise that the prescriptions of centralised control may eventually frustrate the meaningful participation, not only of the public in one or other of its many forms, but also the endeavours of the elected members and their advisors to establish an identifiable community, distinct and different from any other community. Yet, the contrary argument is no less persuasive. The insis-

<sup>(8)</sup> In the economic planning region machinery in Britain in the mid-1960's, each of the relevant 'Whitehall' ministries was represented on the regional economic planning board, with the almost inevitable vertical allegiance to the parent ministries rather than the horizontal allegiance to the region.

<sup>(9)</sup> Maud (1967), vol. 1, para. 252, p. 68.

tence upon a return to listening at the grass roots level (if nothing more dramatic than that), and the mandate to provide 'maximum feasible participation' has largely come from central government, and has been handed down in statutory form to the local level to be put into operation. For example, the urban renewal practices in the United States derived from the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, and the planning practices in Britain defined by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1971, require the incorporation of programmes of citizen participation.

It has become a necessary part of the central government's role to intervene in local democracy to at least provide the framework of decision-making that is conducive to more widespread participation.

The final group, the consultants, is composed of those actors with special skills and professional competences which are engaged, either for a fee or on a voluntary service basis, to provide advice and expertise in subject-areas and for particular socially-disadvantaged groups or individuals that would otherwise not be competently represented. Thus, for example, specialist engineering advice may be sought by a municipal council that ordinarily is advised by its own competent generalist engineer; or particular research assistance may be engaged by a planning authority to provide evidence upon which to base policies. Almost without exception, the resort of local government to external consultants, is to obviate the need to increase its complement of paid staff for a transient phase of service or advice. Quite the contrary situation obtains for the groups within the mass public that seek to challenge the municipal authority (or any 'higher' level of government) either on its failure to act or on the likely outcomes of its proposals to act. Such groups sometimes seek specialist advice, but are more usually anxious to be supported with generalist advice for the sole purpose of achieving a more comprehensive and soundly-based technical case to range against that of the council. This latter form of consultancy, almost invariably done at no cost to the client group, is often referred to as 'advocacy planning' (see later). It is widespread in the areas of conservation, consumerism and legal aid; it is emerging as a significant participatory factor in urban and regional planning as communities, groups and individuals become

aware of the possible beneficial outcomes of challenge to government, as they become aware of the philanthropy of some commercial organisations or government,<sup>(10)</sup> and as they learn of the willingness of professional planners to take up selected causes as outlets for their own radicalism or crusading spirit. A recent bibliography (Mazziotti, 1972) has referred to the emergence of 'clinical advocacy', that is, the involvement of university-based student and staff groups in 'live' planning situations as part of the degree course content.

It may be predicated that this synoptic treatment of the principal participants to the processes of urban and regional planning accurately reflects the assembly of viewpoints and skills necessary to achieve a generally satisfactory solution to most planning problems. In the final event of decision-making, the perception of Calhoun becomes particularly pertinent; there may be doubt that the behaviours of the participants can be aggregated in a co-operative sense to achieve the optimal solution which is theoretically available. In order to better appreciate why this difficulty exists, reference may be made to those behavioural matters that have significant repercussions in group situations.

*Factors Contributing to the  
Distribution of Power between  
the Participants*

A variety of interpretations is possible of the arguments concerning the distribution of power in decision-making situations, and in particular as they influence the exercise of participatory democracy. The trauma of investigating the concepts pertinent to citizen participation continues in this section. Very little in the way of a consensus on the meaning of power exists, a fact which is compounded by the peculiar interpretations of sub-disciplines in the social sciences. For example, Lasswell (1966) has claimed that the study of politics is coincident with the study of influence and the influential; Bazelon (1965) has demonstrated that economics may be conceived as an

<sup>(10)</sup> For example, in Australia, the government's assistance plan and other measures make funds available to community groups to help themselves in the general areas of social service and welfare.

exchange of power, as an interlinked system of threats and promises; Morgenthau (1960), in his theory of international relations, adopts the concept of power with which to analyse a variety of political process problems.<sup>(11)</sup>

Despite the apparent dominance of support for the power concept in the description, analysis and explanation of interpersonal and intergroup relations, there is an alternative supportable viewpoint that, in the exercise of social control, *co-operation* is a significant if not crucial factor. This view contends that power does not necessarily involve conflict and resistance (Weber, 1947). Thus, as will be deduced in a later description of a particular participant group, in situations in which there is a necessary compliance with orders, regulations, directives or behavioural codes handed down from a 'superior' source of power (i.e., 'superior' in the hierarchical sense), the act of compliance may be due more to the acknowledgement that the source may legitimately require acts to be committed and that the compliant approves of the action required than to a commitment based on the fear of reprisals or sanctions if the directives are ignored.

These two facets of power behaviour have been alternatively described by Tedeschi and Bonoma (1972); they have distinguished:

- (a) those means of power used to deliberately effect particular action—i.e., means of *control*;
- (b) those means and tactics used to *manipulate* behaviour.

In the first of these two categories, the manifestation of power is overt, undisguised; orders are handed down with an expectation of response and compliance. The manipulative means of power exertion may be overt and deliberate (e.g. persuasion, inducement, threat), resulting in a reluctant consensus and compliance, or they may be subtle and (even) unconscious (e.g. charismatic manipulation). This simple twofold classification should not be interpreted as definitive and exclusive: in the 'real world', a variable combination of each type may be considered 'normal', with an inclination to one or the

<sup>(11)</sup> Morgenthau (1960) has defined power as "anything that establishes and maintains the control of man over man. Thus, power covers all social relationships which serve that end" (p. 9).



other being determined by the successful application of the initial power ploy.

*Control factors.* Control is the exercise of authority, and the acceptance of such directives as may be promulgated by lower levels of decision-making. In addition, control, as in the development of norms of behaviour or decision-making conduct (e.g. in the use classes orders, development orders, promulgated by the DOE for the 'use' of local planning authorities in Britain) is a dimension of this category of power. Thus, in centralised planning systems, the conduct or scope for manoeuvre by the decision-making (local) government agencies, and the recommendations of the advisory public servants, are all circumscribed in part by higher level controls: "Authority is distinguished . . . by the fact that people *a priori* suspend their own judgements and accept that of legitimate authority without having to be convinced of the accuracy of (its) view."<sup>(12)</sup> Such deference to the wishes or directives of another authority group may be rationalised by those who conform in terms of their own socialised democratic value systems (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963). In this system of tacit acceptance of the validity of the requirement of responses passed down a hierarchical structure, the authority group resorts to the use of the paraphernalia of symbols, traditions, documents, 'mystique', with which to exercise power. The exercise of this form of control is dependent upon the willingness of lower levels of decision-making to refrain from competition in the same area of competence (i.e. for local authority planners to refrain from seriously challenging the centralised planning bureaucracy or its interpretation of situations, or philosophy, or techniques, and so on), and to apply mechanically the directives handed down without challenging their validity, appropriateness, or operational significance.

In urban and regional planning the authority group, or the 'external agencies' group is significantly broad. Sharp (1969), in her revelation of the role of the British Ministry of Housing and Local Government, has commented that the overlap of central government departments in the expression of policies, and in the exercise of control, is considerable, to the extent that every department whose responsi-

<sup>(12)</sup> Tedeschi and Bonoma (1972), p. 38.

lities includes the use of land considers itself involved with the conduct of urban and regional planning. This complex and seldom satisfactorily resolved situation leads to a confused pattern of responsibility and power, leads almost inevitably to tension, and results in a variety of handed down directives which have different time horizons or which are otherwise incompatible. The confusion is amplified by the variable attitudes to lower levels of government struck by the centralised ministries. For example, in respect of education, law and order, and social security, the central departments insist on prescribed performance standards, and exercise through an inspectorate system, close supervision on the work of local departments. In contrast, the conduct of urban and regional planning has been traditionally left by the responsible ministry to the local authorities, principally, but not solely, on the premise that the planning service is locale-specific. To accommodate this freedom of action at the local level, the relevant legislation is expressed in terms which delegate responsibility downwards, fostering an identifiable average standard of performance by means of practice manuals and circulars which interpret the legislation or other statutory instruments. This non-interventionist persuasion is supported by a quasi-judicial means of arbitration.

Such flexible and conciliatory attitudes towards control may, however, be more imagined than real. This may be true particularly when there is a natural tendency for local government to be unsympathetic to the suggestions of central government; in such cases, the lower levels are brought to heel by specific statutory provisions. In quick succession, two Royal Commissions<sup>(13)</sup> called for significantly improved levels of client/consumer participation in the planning of social services, and then of land use and development. Local authorities have seldom been enthusiastic to accept direct public involvement in decision-making, whilst simultaneously conceding the possible benefits to accrue from such exercises. Actual participation in decision-making by those not elected to discharge this function is rare, despite attempts by legislation to accommodate the co-option of lay members to council committees.<sup>(14)</sup> To overcome this reluc-

<sup>(13)</sup> Seebohm Report (1968); Skeffington Report (1969).

<sup>(14)</sup> Such legislation in Britain includes the Local Government Act, 1972.

tance or dilatoriness, the statutory provisions concerning the involvement of the public in plan-making activities may become less discretionary. For example, whether or not a local planning authority in Britain is favourably disposed towards a more open style of government, the spirit of the Skeffington Committee's recommendations has been given statutory (and obligatory) expression in sections 8 and 12 of the 1971 Planning Act.<sup>(15)</sup>

The existence of such power of control in the authority or 'external agencies' group, should ensure a more participatory decision-making process. However, because of the style of statutory and quasi-judicial language, it is still possible for local councils to comply with the text but not necessarily with the spirit of the legislation or subsequent interpretative documentation.

Of some significance to the practice of urban and regional planning is the proliferation of practice notes, manuals and case studies emanating from the central ministry, to indicate what action may be taken, how to organise it, what support services are necessary and so on. For the large-staffed, generally competent planning authorities, this evergrowing body of literature provides aides-memoires, stimuli for further thought and experiment; but for the smaller, less well staffed authorities, such literature almost assumes the status of ministerial directive, particularly if the planning staff is inadequate or too overworked to develop its own strategies and philosophies. Thus, this literature may manipulate a subservient situation.

*Manipulative factors.* A more significantly manipulative factor is that of 'charisma'. In its most simple form, charisma may attract a higher status to a person or to a recommendation than would otherwise be realistic, whereas in its most complex form it may manipulate situations or decisions to follow sectionally (or personally) preferred directions. The study of power, and the contribution of charisma is generally well covered in the literature of social psychology and political science, although there is a dearth of treatment specifically concerned with the conduct of urban and regional planning. The 'distance' of the pertinent literature from most political

<sup>(15)</sup> Ministry Circular 52/72, sets out actions the local planning authority 'might' take to secure more and better informed public participation.

commentators, and from the mass of the public, has contributed to a considerable amount of unstructured comment on the tactics available to leaders or groups to manipulate decision-forming situations. The brief review of this important factor in decision-making may help to develop a greater appreciation of this power element.

Four contributory aspects of the charisma factor may be identified: personal characteristics or qualities, status derived from the role position, prestige derived from resources available for distribution (i.e. patronage potential) and subject-relevant expertise (Tedeschi, 1972).

The authority flowing from personal charisma is only one part, admittedly significant, of the typology of social and political power described by Weber (1947). In his threefold classification of power, he identified three types of authority, one having as its source customs, conventions and mores (traditional authority), another having its sources in statutes (legal authority), and the third deriving its power from a magnetic personality (charismatic authority). Weber has described how the charismatic leader would be able to effect fundamental social change by persuasion and manipulation of the mass public, or the remaining members of a decision-making group, but neither he nor any of his disciples have been able to adequately explain how charisma is acquired or sustained, nor how the remarkable relationship between the charismatic leader and his adherents or his detractors is established and maintained. Various attempts have been made to solve these problems (e.g. Shils, 1965; Perinbanayagam, 1971; Tedeschi, 1972), but none has claimed to more than contribute towards a better understanding of the complexity of problems. Two particular avenues have been explored; strains of political bosses and influentials in closed arenas, and empirical study of persons such as Gandhi, Hitler and the candidates for office of the President of the United States of America.

The personal characteristics of the charismatic are those which imbue him with high levels of self-confidence, and a belief that he is competent and will succeed in whatever tasks he undertakes. This latter aspect of his constitution is not usually unbridled, for many charismatic leaders are aware of the performance horizon, i.e. what is realistic and attainable, and set the course of their actions accordingly; there are a few megalomaniacs, however, that have no percep-

tion of what is really possible. A number of studies in psychology have demonstrated the positive relationships between self-confidence and the existence of attempts to influence situations and other people.<sup>(16)</sup> It is this relationship dimension of the charismatic authority which supports the frequently argued thesis, that charisma is not a personalised characteristic, but a relationship between a leader and the led, a relationship which is dependent upon the construction by the leader and his associates of an image of infallibility, omniscience, incorruptibility, positiveness and success.<sup>(17)</sup> The status characteristic of charisma devolves from the relationship dimension, and particularly from the power of a mass public support base. Status is reflective of the characteristics of the social hierarchy, and is particularly associated with descriptions of decision-making élites. These characteristics (e.g. seniority, nobility, education, income, formal position of authority) have been described as those contributing to "the degree of deference which others believe a person should receive by virtue of his role position".<sup>(18)</sup> Hollander (1964) has suggested that the high status in decision-making accorded to these individuals affords them considerable behavioural latitude, an opportunity to spend extra 'credit points' on innovative or deviant behaviour without the need to seek formal approval, because the approval is tacitly given. In addition, research has shown that participation in group discussions occurs in a close relationship with status or rank, and that status differentiation corresponds significantly with the observed patterns of influence. The third and fourth characteristics of charisma, expertise and prestige, are not easily distinguished from status. Expertise may be interpreted as a means of achieving status, while the control of resources, and hence prestige, is often conferred by particular role positions. There is a perceptible linkage in the possession of knowledge (expertise), the call upon its services, the probability of success in the encounters of influence (and influentials), the expectation of success that enhances self-confidence, and the probability

<sup>(16)</sup> These are reviewed in Tedeschi (1972), pp. 298-302.

<sup>(17)</sup> For example, in national politics, the Russian demotion of the Czechoslovak Dubcek may be construed as an attempt to destroy the charisma attendant upon that temporary political leader: in British planning, T. Dan Smith in Newcastle, evidenced the 'qualities' and the achievements of a charismatic leader (Elliot, 1972).

<sup>(18)</sup> Tedeschi (1972), p. 302.

of success. Jaffee's (1968) analysis of expertise factors includes the amount of situation-relevant information possessed by the individual, his experience in similar situations, the same or similar group, and the competence which the individual has and the group believes he has as a result of previous performances. Because the charismatic person has attracted attention and support as a result of status, his own confidence and prestige, it is more usual for the mode of influence to be manipulative than coercive (Lane, 1959).

Beyond this group relationship, the charisma should (i.e. in order to be effective) extend to the mass public. This is the essential feature emerging from the series of research studies accompanying the American Presidential elections, which have collectively identified contributory determinants of 'the charismatic phenomenon'; these include the existence of a crisis which generates a response in the public which manifests itself in the desperate search for a political 'superman'. This description seems to fit well the cases of Gandhi and Hitler.<sup>(19)</sup> But, as charisma often emerges in conditions of conflict and contradiction, there is an inevitable and simultaneous development of antithetical structures (groups, institutions, etc.) or movements. Elliott's (1972) study of decision-making in Newcastle-upon-Tyne notes this phenomenon. If not a simultaneous development, the growth of an opposition appears a natural reaction, one which is particularly heightened should the leader begin to seriously fail in his endeavours or in the pursuit of personally-selected goals.<sup>(20)</sup>

It is unlikely that the characteristics of charisma can be distributed evenly across the public. The differences in the creative powers of individuals, their respective access to the resources which generate the situations of expertise and prestige, and the basic differences in status attributable to the focus of authority, are contributory to the

<sup>(19)</sup> Brief reviews of the charismatic leadership of Gandhi and Hitler are made in Perinbanayagam (1971); the bibliography makes further reference to accounts of their leadership qualities.

<sup>(20)</sup> The diminution of the once uncritical adulation, and its replacement with a despair of rational and supportable decision-making, contributed to the eclipse of Hitler's power and success: "... his political ability, though certainly high, was bound to lead to disaster when it induced a conviction studiously cultivated by a swarm of flatterers that he was infallible and no longer needed advice." Heiber, H. (1968) in Stein, G. H., *Hitler: Great Lives Observed*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, p. 159.

unequal dispersion of charisma. Of these differences, and of the personal characteristics previously considered, the most dominant determinant of the existence of a state of charismatic leadership is authority, or status. Because of the various dimensions of the quality of authority, modern complex societies are "enmeshed in a perpetual strain of competing conceptions about the ultimate locus of charisma";<sup>(21)</sup> it is this continuing situation of conflict that renders the significance of charisma individually transient, and susceptible to changes in fashion. In urban and regional planning, the evidence of charismatic leadership may be identified with particular senior planners, chairmen of committees or of councils, or of particular consultants. Thus, for the conduct of planning, the most frequent locations for discernible and personified charisma are to be found amongst the elected representatives, the planners and the consultants, the particular location of most charismatic leadership being dependent on the balance of personalities between these groups.

Particular case studies differentially validate many of the theoretical considerations discussed in this section, and support Morgenthau's interpretation of power as a system of manoeuvres to effect control by one man or group over others.<sup>(22)</sup>

#### *The Media as a Participant Group*

In the introduction to their edited collection of papers, Berelson and Janowitz (1965) suggest that the growth of a more open society, with the accompanying features of extended literacy and the technological capability for mass communication, has generated a demand for adequate communications with and between diverse audiences and social groups: "the development of democratic processes has widened the public whose opinions count, and has increased the

<sup>(21)</sup> Shils (1965), p. 213.

<sup>(22)</sup> In addition to the standard sources (mainly American in origin), the volume of cases being contributed by undergraduate dissertations and postgraduate theses in university and college departments of planning, government and politics, and psychology, provide useful literature upon which to assess the existence and effectiveness of charismatic leadership.

social and political responsibilities of the communication media."<sup>(23)</sup> It is clear that the communications media have an important role, both in disseminating information upon which opinions and attitudes may be formed, and in constructively contributing to the fashioning of those attitudes and opinions. There are many participation programmes which have included the production and distribution of a newspaper; some have resorted to the use of a strip cartoon format. Other programmes have included regular items in television newscasts or have exercised an option to 'report to the people' by means of a five-minute documentary. Still others have used other communication techniques, particularly of an audio-visual nature, in conjunction with static or mobile exhibitions. The potential for the use of the established media channels is considerable, and is no less than for the use of the translations of conventional communication techniques directly by the organisers of the participation programmes.

This brief consideration of the impact of the media on the process of citizen participation is confined to the former of these two; due attention will be given to some examples of the translations of conventional techniques in Chapter 7.

Throughout most research papers and the analysis of case studies, is the underlying issue of the power and influence of the mass media. In the literature of about forty years ago, there was an identifiable emphasis on the powerful impact of both advertising and propaganda. Since that time, as research has become more sophisticated, it has become possible to isolate the conditions under which the mass media have, or do not have, significant effects; this has led to the separation of the effects into 'direct' and 'indirect' categories, and to the revelation of the importance of the state of mind of the recipient of the media output, and of the charisma of the purveyor of information or opinions. Hill (1970) has commented that in democratic society the media is an essential element of public debate; this observation remains valid whether the impact of the media is interpreted as progressive, constructive and deliberate, or as reactionary, destructive and inadvertent. The observation remains valid, even though vulnerable, in the face of threats to efficient and unprejudiced

<sup>(23)</sup> Berelson and Janowitz (1965), p. 1.



communication; Lasswell (1948) has identified the manipulation of the media by power (through the distortion brought about by the adjustment of reports to accord with a particular ideology), by wealth (through the insistence on the primacy of particular economic interests), and by social class (through the deliberate restriction of the reporting perspective to a single identifiable strata of society). In order to overcome the manipulations and prejudices which are patently possible, and manifest in some countries or even localities, Lasswell insists that society should set itself a goal of unprejudiced reporting and commentary, striving for "equivalent enlightenment" between experts, leaders and laymen. Berelson (1952) has contributed a formula from his interpretation of democratic theory which, by simple translation may be predicated as the criteria by which the performance of any constituent of the media may be judged: these criteria may be stated as:

1. the possession of an appropriate reporting structure to cover the interests of its audience;
2. a concern to be involved in public affairs (i.e. to be educative rather than wholly entertaining);
3. the possession of principles;
4. the accurate perception and transmission of political realities;
5. a willingness to engage in and to promote informed discussion;
6. a propensity towards unbiased comment;
7. the furtherance of the total community interest.<sup>(24)</sup>

The contribution of the media to strategies of citizen participation is largely conditioned by its general practices of education, entertainment, and of providing a reasonably accessible forum for public debate; certainly, the audience is the largest likely to be reached. These practices have been subjected to scrutiny by various researchers, in order to achieve a model of the community's need

<sup>(24)</sup> Berelson has commented that the political theory of democracy requires the electorate to possess appropriate personality structures, to be interested in and to participate in public affairs, to be principled and correctly perceive the realities of political situations, to participate in public debate and to judge matters rationally and without prejudice, and to consider the broad public interest. In the reference to Berelson's thesis, the same prerequisites have been set out for the media (Berelson, 1952).

of media support. Fontaine has in some way achieved this in his examination of the media's striving for excellence. In commenting on the shortfall, Fontaine has particularly identified that the public, drawing on its own experience, does not always believe the output of the media. However, the scepticism is largely selective; but that it exists at all is an indication of the potential vulnerability of a radio station, television channel or a newspaper to quantitative changes in its audience because of perceived prejudice. It may be reasonably alleged that the ratio of hard information to sheer entertainment is not always judged to the satisfaction of the audience, and that the volume of advertising may be disproportionate to the value of the remaining 'space'. One of the significant disadvantages to anyone commenting upon the impact of the media is the poor state of substantive research; the collection of audience or readership statistics, the attraction of advertisements, the achievement of a photo-essay award, are not useful barometers of the impact on the public. Fontaine has listed what he refers to as 'the really difficult questions', as (a) to what extent has dramatic reporting distorted the audience's concepts of reality? (b) to what extent has the continuous reporting of societal misdemeanours and crimes contributed to a persistence and growth of social malaise? (c) to what extent has the media contributed to the popularity of extremism?

This is the general background against which it is possible to consider the impact of the media at the local level on matters capable of consideration in programmes of citizen participation.

*The Mass Media and local government activity.* In a particularly vituperative examination, Enzensberger (1972) has commented that the media has become the pacemaker for social and economic development, his criticism being generated by his belief that the media, with its recent technological advances and current capability, is manipulating social change: "every use of the media presupposes manipulation... there is no such thing as unmanipulated writing, filming, or broadcasting."<sup>(25)</sup> That the media has the potential to participate in the bringing about of change is an undeniable and possibly desirable facet of its societal role, a role which can be discharged in

<sup>(25)</sup> Enzensberger (1970) in McQuail (1972), p. 107.

Content supplies explicit and concrete information

		YES	NO
Content is fictional	NO	1 News, Current affairs, Educational content, etc.	2 Entertainment, Music, etc.
	YES	3 Instructional plays, Certain features, etc.	4 Drama, Plays, Novels, Short stories, etc.

Fig. 4.2. Participation by the media (source: Rosengren and Windahl, 1972).

any of the typology segments hypothesised by Rosengren and Windahl (1972) (Fig. 4.2).

It would be comforting to the theorist if empirical study supported the traditional theory of mass communication that the various components of the media fulfilled the vital function of communication channel between the elected representatives and the public, fashioning opinions by the presentation of information and the advocacy of particular causes, and simultaneously 'socialising' the politicians by means of the responses engendered by the style of reporting. Seymour-Ure (1969, 1974) has challenged this theory, arguing that the audience select particular media outlets for reasons quite divorced from politics. However, there is evidence to support the contention that the various media constituents effectively reinforce opinions and determine the agenda of public discussion, whilst being of significance to the politicians as a means of disseminating information, deliberately or by unfortunate and unsought disclosure. Thus, the theory argues that the media contribute positively to the democratic processes, whereas empirical evidence (or informed opinion) tends to invalidate this assumption. For participation practices, therefore, the arguments and counter-arguments are inconclusive.

A variety of examinations have been conducted into the impact of the media at the local level, aimed particularly at the role of the press. Paletz and others (1971) conducted an investigation into the differences between the actual proceedings of council meetings and the reports of them carried in the local press. Their conclusions

were that the performance of the local media contributed little to the generation of interest in local government or in the local politicians or officials, and perhaps may be partially responsible for the low level of interest held by the public. The failure of most media outlets to comprehensively report verbatim the deliberations of local government has, however, two distinct benefits; firstly, it insulates the debators from the close scrutiny of the electorate, and secondly it perpetuates the mystique surrounding politicking, camouflaging the displays of inefficiency and inequitable representation. Paletz and his co-researchers have extended their evaluation to assert that a more objective and comprehensive system of reporting, such as that inferred by Berelson, "might well increase community tensions, conflicts and the likelihood of civil disturbances".<sup>(26)</sup> Despite the newsworthiness of emotion-charged participation events in urban and regional planning, the tone of the reporting is likely to be different when the participation is forced on the local council, when the exercises form constituents in a rationally prepared, statutorily required decision-making process. In the first situation, the news then might be featured prominently, with the utilisation of the array of paraphernalia presently available to reporters; but the matters, not infrequently, are in competition with others for prominence, and the sudden development of another news story would result in the relegation of the first story from its prominent position. Thus, the item might become 'lost', juxtaposed between a miscellany of disparate unrelated events. In this situation the newspaper has an advantage over the other means of mass communication because the reader may concentrate at his leisure on those items of interest to him, and may return to them repeatedly if he needs to, whereas, the television viewer or the radio listener is subjected to a tantalising and rapid presentation of news items, treated partially and largely superficially, on such disparate matters as mayhem in Vietnam to pet shows, or to deodorant commercials. The cold attention to authority-supported events, in contrast, creates "psychological distance" between the reader/listener/viewer of the event; this distance is manufactured by the use of official language or subject-specific jargon,

<sup>(26)</sup> Paletz *et al.* (1971), p. 92.

reference to collective decisions, the use of respectful, deferential tones, the resort to depersonalised and institutionalised role descriptions, and the careful selection of reference to jurisdictional or procedural disputes. On occasions, in order to achieve accuracy, precise language is used, which is frequently and regrettably incomprehensible to the 'target' of the report.

The need of the news media to be able to react instantly to new situations is in conflict with the notion of carefully prepared releases in accord with a previously conceived schedule of activities. Thus, whilst the conformity with a rational and repetitive programme may generate confidence in the public, the low key approach of careful organisation may be frustrated by the emergence of possibly more interesting or contentious matters previously unenvisaged. As most of the media is dependent on advertising revenue, its ability to react to rapidly changing circumstances overrides its commitment to studiously prepared political decision-making programmes—unless there is nothing competing for the 'space'. An associated facet of the conservatism of local government activity, is the resort to symbolic acts of ceremony and pageantry, which psychologists suggest serve to reassure the public that the governmental system is functioning efficiently and adequately (Edelman, 1964). The reporting of such events may omit comment on the value of the agencies or the object of the ceremony, but by diverting the attention of the public, it contributes to the general attitude of satisfaction (Lasswell, 1930). This flamboyant style of public presentation has been indulged in some participatory exercises in planning.<sup>(27)</sup>

Paletz's investigation, whilst describing the reporting of council events, asserted that it was the style of reporting selected by the news media which contributed to the particular impression of the proceedings received by the audience. Thus, for planners, politicians, and all participants in the planning process, the communication style is vitally important, and therefore, the rapport between reporters and the reported must achieve significantly high levels. Groombridge (1972), in his interesting study of participation and television, has

<sup>(27)</sup> For a description of "ebullient participation" in the Los Angeles Goals Program, see Fagence (1973), *Journal, Royal Town Planning Institute* vol 59, No. 4, pp. 190-1.

observed that "the television interview has added a qualitatively new and important dimension to the practice of democratic accountability,"<sup>(28)</sup> yet both of the 'instant' mediums, (i.e. radio and television), after gaining a foothold in immediacy of question and answer may fail to achieve their reporting objectives if the interviewer or the interviewee (or both) are manifestly inept and insensitive. To further aggravate this sensitive issue of reporting styles, the commercial channels are prone to devise a 'presentation' which is entertaining rather than informative. For example, Eversley (1973), in describing the community with which planners are expected to interact, makes reference to the problem of validating the extreme allegations made during television interviews by the allegedly deprived, disadvantaged, dispossessed, threatened; to the difficulty of pursuing desirable planning policies in the face of the distortions of reality manufactured by the producers of the 'documentary' film. He alleges that the potentially educative, constructive, integrative role of the media is sometimes discarded in favour of a bias, and that, despite the recognition of the situation by most planners, there are few indications that serious attempts are made to remedy the situation. As a result, the entire planning process is not respectfully regarded.

"The media have been a powerful instrument in increasing the discontent. Sometimes with good intentions, but usually because it is good for circulation, they have singled out the planner as the personification of bureaucracy, meanness, corruption and downright professional incompetence. Almost every new building is attacked, every plan is torn to shreds by lay and expert correspondents alike, only the most utopian and expensive (usually foreign) scale models are praised to the skies. Films on television, whether alleged documentaries or semi-official efforts, have portrayed the planner in the most unfavourable light possible. He is invariably insensitive, a bungler, hides behind his rule book, is inaccessible and passes the buck. Of course, much of this is invaluable in furthering re-examination of planning objectives and practices. But much is also destructive—offering no alternative solutions. The families whose cases are shown are not average, but the most wretched that could be found.

<sup>(28)</sup> Groombridge (1972), p. 102.

No town hall or planning department is ever shown doing anything well—it would not be news, like ‘dog biting man’. When planners are interviewed, their full replies (admittedly often pompous and evasive) are never shown, only disconnected excerpts cleverly constructed to make them appear fools. (It is rare for a practising planner to be given any time or space in the media—the criticism is normally voiced by laymen.)”<sup>(29)</sup>

The practices of each of the constituent elements of the media confuse any persistent assessment of their value to exercises of citizen participation; the degree to which any medium is consistently constructive, informative and helpful to each planning matter is suspiciously conjectural. Hill’s (1970) investigation of the impartiality of the local press has revealed three criteria, which may be used to assess the operations of the press. These are concerned with the fundamental availability of information, the competence of the local reporting and editorial staff, and the attitudes of the local bodies to the publication of reports or commentaries on their proceedings. The ability of the local press to discharge their educational function is severely circumscribed by the interaction of these three factors; therefore, the opportunity for the local people to take an intelligent interest in the issues and future plans likely to effect their community, is similarly constrained. What is true for the local press is similarly valid for local radio and television. With the operation of these constraints, perhaps it would be unwise to expect the media to be particularly helpful in any participation strategy. The dilemmas of reporting are described in various sources.<sup>(30)</sup> These difficulties seldom exercise the minds of planners; their particular problems are related to (a) the image of planning and the planners communicated by the media, (b) the accuracy of the reporting, and (c) the ‘believability’ of the broadcast or published reports (Jacobson, 1969).

Two final points are worthy of notice. McQuail and others (1972) have remarked upon the ‘escapist thesis’ which recognises the use

<sup>(29)</sup> Eversley (1973), pp. 170–1.

<sup>(30)</sup> Hill (1970), chap. 6, is a useful starting point in the literature of political science. The two books of Seymour-Ure (1968, 1974), and others in the *Communication and Society Series*, edited by Tunstall, published by Constable (London), and Sage (Beverly Hills), would provide valuable insights. Seymour-Ure’s most recent book (1974) has a particularly useful bibliography.

of the media as "a type of behaviour which is remarkably unconstrained, free from feelings of duty and obligation, a collectively sanctioned withdrawal from social life."<sup>(31)</sup> This behaviour pattern fails to meet the oft-expressed aspiration of the media that it is a potentially educative force, capable of extending perception and knowledge horizons, and of broadening the participation base in civic life. Doubtless, these aspirations are being partially met, but the public in general seems quickly to attain the threshold of commitment and then proceeds to retire into complacency, preferring to be entertained than educated. McQuail and his colleagues consider that, despite the quantity and quality of news and current affairs items, it is likely that no enduring links of sympathy or commitment are forged between the public and the decision-making processes and the decision-makers. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1960), in coining the expression 'narcotizing dysfunction', have drawn attention to the likelihood that the act of receiving information easily might become a substitute for genuine democratic participation. Groombridge (1972) has extended the description of the dilemma: with reference to the impact of television, he asserts that the public's awareness of current affairs has been heightened, but the very skill of presentation has transformed concern to detached interest, which has in turn been translated into reaction to a spectacle—to react to but not to become involved with. "Television is providing information for surveillance and orientation, and yet the effect is alienating."<sup>(32)</sup> Difficulties of a different kind seem to beset the use of local newspapers as the medium of communication in exercises of democratic participation. Stringer and Plumridge (1974) in their synoptic treatment of publicity and communications media, have referred to a fundamental issue; who produces the material for publication? Drawing on the experience of the British linked project into the participation experiences in selected structure plan areas, they report that two solutions have been attempted, neither of which has yet to be proven totally satisfactory. One solution has been to develop a congenial relationship between planners and journalists, with the latter undertaking the role for which they are most suited, composing their materials from infor-

<sup>(31)</sup> McQuail *et al.* (1972), p. 138.

<sup>(32)</sup> Groombridge (1972), p. 113.



mation supplied formally or informally from specially convened conferences or working lunches. Some unease has been experienced with this procedure, which is vitally dependent upon the maintenance of good personal relationships. As a result, some planning authorities have published their own news-sheets. The principal difficulties attending this solution to the dilemma have revolved around the central lack of competence amongst planners of the peculiar writing style required for material for a general readership. As a result, the content is usually inadequate; but, most often, concern seems to be expressed on the less important matter of distribution of the news-sheet!

The various constituents of the media each exhibit problems to frustrate the discharge of meaningful contributions to the planning process. This represents one of the more serious inadequacies in the participation process; there is little in the available literature to indicate the means by which such difficulties may be overcome.

Having digressed twice, once to consider some of the behavioural dimensions of participant interaction, and a second time to review the media as a participant group, it is now necessary to return to the deeper examination of each of the principal participant groups. This task is undertaken in Chapter 5.

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## CHAPTER 5

### The Participants

Much of the enthusiasm for governmental reform, and particularly for reform of local government, has typically concentrated on structural and procedural matters. Thus, at various times, and with different degrees of seriousness, attention has been given to the size of local government units, the range of services for which control should be localised, the hierarchical structure of authority and the distribution of power, the form of management, the relationship between the bureaucracy and the politicians, and, with special reference to urban and regional planning, the distribution of plan-making responsibilities, and the forms of communication likely to achieve meaningful plans. Much less attention has been given to the behaviour patterns and the roles within the structures, and to the dynamics of decision-making. In addition, whilst it must be conceded that there is an identifiable core of interest in the variables influencing decision-making activities at the local level, there has been a tendency for research to be most concerned with 'universals' or with the attractive personality or role-centred matters at the higher levels of government. (Blondell and Hall, 1967). For urban and regional planning, however, this observation is largely invalid, and the situation is substantially the opposite; the emergence of interest in the potential for citizen participation at the local level has bred a number of studies which reveal the principal participants, and the interactions between them (for example, Hampton, 1970; Dennis, 1970, 1972; Davies, 1972; Eversley, 1973).

The sources of conflict and the processes of conflict resolution are as indigenous to local activity as they are to any other political or social system. In the final analysis, it is perhaps one of the principal functions of political institutions to provide an environment

which either directly renders the potential conflict of less consequence, or incidentally provides one or more forums in which the conflict is reduced to manageable proportions (Blondell and Hall, 1967).

In the examination of the participants which follows, attention will be paid particularly to a description of the total group and to the identification of important roles, to the competences, motivations and responsibilities of the group (as a whole), and to the inter-relationships of one group with others.

*The (Local) Elected Representative*

Although there have been numerous studies of the local elected councilman, there has not emerged a typical model; Hill (1974) has remarked that the concept of 'representation' in modern democratic government is dependent on the variety of possible manifestations, in order to cater for the radicals and the conservatives, the young and the old, the interested and the apathetic, the 'comprehensives' and the 'parochials', and so on. It is this variety of expression that would seem necessary that renders most elected members patently untypical. By reason of political socialisation, the attitudes and motivations of councilmen are more partisan and committed than those of the majority of his constituents;<sup>(1)</sup> and, as the provision of a responsibility for social service becomes more concentrated at the local level, it is almost inescapable that the councillor becomes less closely identified with a constituency or ward, and more closely identified with a general trusteeship of public affairs (Eulau, 1962).

In order to better analyse the existing management structure in the British system of local government, so as to be able to make meaningful recommendations for change should that be necessary, the investigating Royal Commission (Maud, 1967) conducted a sample survey of elected representatives. The data collected represents a significantly comprehensive review of the councillor, his personal characteristics, the council workload, the councillor's ambitions, satisfactions and frustrations in council work, his relationships with other organisations and political parties, the constituent-

<sup>(1)</sup> The strong party influence, and the general environment of council business "establish the rules of the game for the individual member" (Hill, 1974, p. 140).

member relationship, and the motivations of 'running' for office and for resignation.<sup>(2),(3)</sup> Particularly useful in clarifying some of the dimensions of the councillor's perception of his role is the analysis of Blondell and Hall (1967). Four 'planes' of perception may be identified: (1) the part the actors think they play in the local political system, and the extent to which their political ambitions are fulfilled; (2) the opinions held of the local decision-making system; (3) the opinions held of the distribution of power within the council, and with the wider constituent community; (4) the decision-making environment. These recorded centralised perceptions are supportive of Stanyer's (1971) assessment that local councils are miniature political and administrative systems, capable of developing their own patterns of interactions and adaptive behaviour. The impressive dossier on the public service at the local level<sup>(4)</sup> generally substantiates many of the independent scholarly studies. Of particular value, especially for the considerations of this study on citizen participation, are the revelations by Maud of the motivations to become a councillor (Maud, 1967, vol. III, chap. 2), of the time spent on council business (chap. 3), the satisfaction and frustration which such work brings (chap. 4), and the environment of decision-making at the local level (chaps. 5 to 8).

Despite the revealed general indicators of a 'typical' councillor, caution should be exercised in any real attempt to develop a model of the councillor archetype. For example, substantial differences were identified in the personal and political characteristics of the elected members, differences which occurred both between councils of the same type, and those of different types. The recorded differences between age groups, party affiliations, educational and income levels were reflected in the revealed willingness of individuals to become involved in elections, in grass roots activities, and in the experiment

<sup>(2)</sup> The response rates to the sample survey were: (a) to the postal enquiry—88% (3,289 completed schedules); (b) to the personal interviews—92% (598); (c) to the personal interviews of ex-councillors—84% (156). (Maud, 1967, p. 4).

<sup>(3)</sup> The information gathered from the Maud study is generally in accord with the less ambitious, and more geographically constrained (and, therefore, peculiar) studies of Hampton (1970) in Sheffield, and Blondell and Hall (1967), in two municipalities in Essex.

<sup>(4)</sup> This is Hill's (1974) observation on the Maud report.

with innovations to extend the practice of participatory democracy into the community. These differences have been remarked upon by Hill (1974), and by Newton (1972) who has distinguished a progression pattern in political involvement, extending from the pro-delegationist preference and role-perception of the youngest and newest elected members, through the mid-career politicians who seek to combine the delegate role with that of the trustee, to the long-serving members who perceive their role primarily as an assumption of responsibility to exercise judgement as trustees. This division along a continuum of service and responsibility is further demonstrated by the differential preference of councillors to become actively involved with their constituents through ward 'clinics' or to be no less concerned but less directly involved by service on welfare-oriented council committees attending to such matters as housing, education, health and welfare, planning. The Maud sample revealed some variations in the time spent on council work, and reported the differences according to occupation and length of committee service.<sup>(5)</sup> The record identifies that the work of the planning committee ranked second (to housing) in its consumption of time spent on all committee work. However, despite the amount of time given to the work of the planning committee, the degree of satisfaction secured appears to be significantly low. The poor showing of planning continues in the stated nominations of the areas of council work (in

<sup>(5)</sup> Time spent on *planning* committee work:  
as a proportion of all committee work—16%

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as a proportion of all committee work of	
professionals, employers, managers	—19%
small businessmen	—16%
manual workers	—13%

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as a proportion of all committee work of	
members <3 years service	—18%
members 4-9 years service	—15%
members 10-20 years service	—13%
members 21 or more years service	—18%

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The data for this table, and the discussion in the remainder of this paragraph is drawn from Maud (1967), vol. III, chaps 2 and 3.

the member's experience and perception) which had contributed to the improved welfare of the constituents.

The motivations to stand for election, and the self-identification of roles, revealed in the Maud and academic studies bear a sufficiency of similarity for some generalisations to be offered. The factors contributing to the self-induced motivation, or to the invitation to stand for election include the inherent personal aptitude for public service, the associated possession of specialised knowledge and interest of use in community work, a history of active involvement in non-council organisations, party associations or trade unions, and a community identity or 'following'. To these factors may be added the personal predispositions or aspirations to remedy specific situations or to plead for a particular cause, to represent groups considered to be unrepresented, to further a particular political ideology, to continue a family tradition, or to ensure representation of a ward or an interest in the absence of an alternative candidate. Some of these aspects will be commented upon in the description of the survey conducted amongst candidates for election in a south of England county, reported later in this section. Although research into local government generally has a reasonable lineage, it is only slowly concentrating on the previously unfathomable behavioural aspects. In addition to the previously cited studies, Heclo (1969) has postulated a structure against which the roles assumed by the elected representatives may be tested. He has identified three types of representative: the committee man, the constituency representative, and the party (or ideological) activist. Almost inevitably, the assumption of a councillor's role introduces distinct transformations in the person's life style, his perceptions and knowledge of the controlling functions of government activity; the member, once elected, becomes a changed person, the change being brought about particularly by the commitment made to council work in time, interest and energy. It is the difficulties of discharging the new role and its responsibilities which generate the tension for the voluntary and the amateur decision-maker in the complex environment of local government. In the already tense situation the capabilities of accommodating the external clamouring for public involvement must be prejudiced; the clamour to introduce another variable, almost unpredictable in its perform-



ance, must alienate the sympathy of many of those elected to discharge the decision-making function. The confusion of intuition, political dogma, technical criteria, statutory obligations, responsibilities or dictums commonly pervasive of local government, is inimicable to rational decision-making; but the amateur status of the council's membership is particularly representative of the community at large.

No matter how the motivations are interpreted, and no matter what comments are passed on the competence of the elected members to discharge the responsibilities of government, the need for decisions to be made requires someone to stop deliberating and cogitating, and to act. Thus, the definition of the perfect decision-making team is the luxury of the scholar. Stanyer (1971), and Self (1971), have significantly denied themselves that luxury, and have concentrated on the need to improve the managerial capabilities of the elected members. Stanyer has emphasised the inadvisability of fitting the available calibre of elected decision-maker to preconceived or predetermined roles, and has advocated the contrary process of fitting the roles to the available personnel. Such a system of role allocation would conform to the typology of planners' functions formulated by Rabinovitz (1968). Self has approached this matter from a different perspective, distinguishing a different set of norms from the socio-political characteristics of elected members. His interpretation is that councillors interpret their role as one of custody of community interests, a role which requires infrequent interventions, such interventions occurring mainly in the form of objections to the propositions of higher levels of government, or to the recommendations of the council's technical advisors. The role prescription reported by Self is one of persistent tacit support for policies and programmes which emerge from the generally passive political consensus. As 'payment' for his 'duty', the elected member attracts self-importance, social prestige, and achieves some of his personal political ambition (Tedeschi, 1972).

Five role functions have been identified by Self: briefly, these are (1) decision-making—involving policy preparation and resource allocation within a framework 'handed down' from a higher tier of government; (2) review of and control over the implementation of policies by the council's technical, administrative and professional

staff, and particularly their use of delegated discretion; (3) attention to the requirements and grievances of constituents; (4) advocacy of particular interests; (5) prosecution of community leadership. Some of these functions, and others specifically related to the motivations, competences and knowledge of elected members have been tested in a pilot study of candidates for election to an English county. The results of this study are synoptically treated at this point in the examination of the elected representative, as an indication of the gap which needs to be filled at the local level by direct public involvement.

*The Hampshire study.* An investigation was conducted in 1973 into the attitudes towards citizen participation of candidates offering themselves for election to the reconstituted Hampshire County Council.\* From the study it was hoped to gather some insight into the levels of interest, experience and professional competence of the elected members in matters concerned with urban and regional planning, and to develop an awareness of their conception of the place for participation, and the means by which it might be achieved. Each of the 202 candidates received a ten question *pro-forma*. The first three questions sought information on the personal, political and geographical identity of the respondent; the remaining questions sought (a) to identify the community activities in which the respondents had an interest, had committee experience, or had experience in another political forum, or perhaps a combination of all three; (b) to identify the expertise base from which other responses were made; (c) to determine those areas of local government activity in which it was considered appropriate to incorporate, as an integral part of the decision-making process, the practice of citizen participation; (d) to identify the means of achieving such participation in the conduct of planning business; (e) to identify the experience the respondents already had in participatory activities; (f) to glean some awareness of the reasons for the pursuit of increased levels of lay involvement in decision-making at the local level; and finally, (g)

\* The study was conducted by M. T. Fagence. The results have not been previously published.

to note the attention given by the respondents to the Skeffington Report (1969).

Of the 202 questionnaires distributed only 59 (29.2%) were returned in a usable form. This poor response rate largely frustrated the purpose of the study, and certainly invalidates any attempt to assert general applicability of the tentative conclusions which are referred to in the following paragraphs. However, three comments are pertinent in extenuation. No attempt was made to distribute a second questionnaire to those candidates which had not responded to the first, and no attempt was made subsequently to remedy the information deficiency. Secondly, the timing of the study might have incidentally contributed to the partial invalidity of the results, falling as it did in the period of post-election euphoria and zeal, or dejection and cynicism. Finally, the response rate of the successful candidates at the election was superior to that of the unsuccessful candidates, representing 37.1% of the ultimately elected members. For these reasons, the following discussion and comment is based on the responses of the elected members.<sup>(6)</sup>

The first questions on the *pro forma*, which sought to establish a comparative base for the later specific invitations to comment on dimensions of citizen participation, were concerned with the identification of those members which professed an interest and competence in urban and regional planning. Of those responding to the question, two-thirds expressed an interest in planning matters, but only one-quarter reported both an interest in the matters and experience in decision-making, either with a council committee or with a special interest group. Perhaps because of a misinterpretation of the intention of the question, three respondents recorded committee experience in planning, but no interest in the matters! Only a small proportion of those expressing either an interest or committee experience

<sup>(6)</sup> The statistics of the response were:

	Elected	Not elected	Totals
Responded	36	23	59
Did not respond	61	82	143
Totals	97	105	202

remarked upon their professional experience in the related development or design professions.

The remaining five questions moved the investigation closer to the specific matter of citizen participation. The first of these sought to provoke an indication of those areas of local government activity which might be appropriate to accommodate participatory exercises of some kind. Overwhelmingly, the response nominated urban and regional planning as a suitable area of activity; the propositions of the extension of such practices to education, housing, welfare, public works and finance were dramatically of a lower order. However one-fifth of the respondents remarked that if the principle of public involvement has to be put into practice it should operate across all areas of local government activity. Few of the respondents signifying the adoption of participation practices in planning had not previously indicated an interest in the matters of planning. The next question sought nomination of the means by which meaningful citizen participation may be achieved. Nineteen means were identified;<sup>(7)</sup> these conveniently fell into three categories—information/education; consultation; involvement. Four respondents recommended the application of those means described in the Skeffington Report, while seven (i.e. one-fifth) declined to offer any pertinent comment. Considerable emphasis in the responses was given to the need to conduct a process of education with the other practices, in order to facilitate a more meaningful lay input. Few of the respondents exhibited an innovatory attitude to the means of participation, although many placed public meetings in a low priority, and a significant number recommended the introduction of a Geddesian proposal, that the community be

<sup>(7)</sup> The means identified, categorised into the three 'categories' of participation, and listed in order of frequency of mention, were:

- (a) Information/education—programme of education for the public, exhibitions, 'open' committee meetings, use of the local media, advertisement of *all* planning proposals and applications, publicity campaigns and public meetings, publication of draft proposals;
- (b) consultation—exhibitions, more responsive councillors, opinion polls and surveys, consultation with interest groups, establishment of council-lay working parties;
- (c) involvement—award of 'prizes' to locally generated plans, promotion of local specialists, door-to-door canvassing, community projects, neighbourhood meetings, membership of representatives of interest groups on Committees.

encouraged to put forward its own plans, for which prizes might be awarded to the preferred or implemented proposal.

Despite the variety of participatory means identified, the respondents only identified five means of which they had personal experience. The most mentioned means was the 'proper' use of the elected member, either through the conventional processes of contact or through the 'ward clinic'. Somewhat surprisingly, because of the low priority given to it as a means in response to the previous question, the second most cited means was the public meeting. Most respondents had become involved in some way with the machinations of current planning problems in their districts, both in their elected capacity, and separately, as a member of a local activist community group. The use of the public inquiry system as presently practised was commented upon by only two of the thirty-six respondents. In response to the question, it was common for two or more means to be identified. In a comparison of the means identified with the means experienced, there were few instances of an elected member recommending an improvement to his own responsible performance. Not surprisingly, the widest range and frequency of experience seems to have occurred to the members of urban constituencies.

Six reasons were nominated for the upsurge of interest by the community in the potential of extended citizen participation. These, generally, support the contention that participation is sought and is practised mainly by those whose land, property, livelihood or other interest is threatened by proposed planning action. The most frequently cited reason was the concern individuals had for the protection of their tangible interests, and the concern they felt over the potential impact of planning proposals on their own property and the environment generally. Such concerns were considered only marginally of greater significance than the perceptible erosion of respect for the conventional decision-makers, the councillors and their 'expert' advisors. Although mentioned by one-quarter of the respondents, the nomination of the perceived benefit to decision-makers and consumers in planning of an extended participation base, the response may be interpreted as expressing the expected sentiments. Very little significance was attached to the impact of the media, or of the Skeffington Report. The responses of the candidates unsuccessful-

ful at the election were particularly cynical; some denied the validity of the trend, others protested its unilateral introduction, and still others considered the trend to be politically motivated.

The final question sought simply to ascertain (a) the proportion of those elected to the Council which had read the Skeffington Report; (b) the relationship between those that had read it and those that urged the introduction of participation practices into planning; and (c) the relationship between those that had not read the Report but had recommended the extension of citizen participation into planning. Two-thirds of the elected members had read the study, and of those, almost all had also recommended the accommodation of public inputs into the plan-making process; one-third, however, had not read the Report, and all of these had recommended the introduction of participation practices. (The significance of this last statistic is both clear and a cause for concern.)

As was pointed out in an earlier paragraph, the response to the invitation to participate in the investigation was so poor that the drawing of meaningful and generally applicable conclusions has been frustrated. However, the analysis of the responses which were made tends to indicate almost unequivocal insistence that participation practices are appropriate for the planning decision-making process, that before satisfactory means can be deployed the potential participants need educating in the matters of concern to planning, and that the prime motivations for direct involvement are concern for tangible interests and suspicion of the operations of the elected members, and their advisors. In order to interpret the significance of the comments passed by the newly elected members, it is probably necessary to be aware that three-quarters of them were of a conservative/non-socialist political persuasion, and that they were almost equally representative of urban and non-urban constituencies.

'*The Stage Army*'. Hill (1970) has made reference to the decision-making fraternity as the 'Stage Army of the Good', and that this élite corps, whilst, in theory, facilitating a wider comprehension of public matters for the public, innocently contributes to the development of a communications gap between the governed and the governors. Not only is there this credibility dilemma, to which reference

was made in the Hampshire Study, but there is also a potentially debilitating phenomenon in the complexity of administrative structures and procedures which are established to cope with the comprehensive activities of local government. It has been argued that whilst it is not unduly difficult for the professional staff to comprehend the decision-making processes and the appropriate channels of communication, partly because it has devised them, the situation is particularly difficult for the part-time politician; Lee (1963) has asked, what, in this situation can an elected member do to elevate his status beyond that of a voluntary helper?<sup>(8)</sup> One of the courses open to the elected member is to indulge in an educational programme, specialising in particular spheres of administration, and receiving perhaps unconscious tuition from the professional staff. The extent to which this educational process is deliberately embarked upon is reflective of the seriousness with which the elected member approaches his constituency responsibilities; conversely, the degree to which the professional staff contribute to the education is indicative of the seriousness with which it approaches the matter of the political-technical dialogue. There may be a case that the quality of the decisions emanating from the political arena is largely determined by the quality of the educational process in the particular matters of that area of government activity, a process over which the professional staff have considerable control. Lee's evaluation of the specialised study undertaken by committee members in Cheshire reveals an improved awareness of the technical arguments and a resulting tendency towards objectivity, and a sympathetic trend away from parochialism.

No matter how commendable the improvement to the calibre of the elected member, the result may well be a widening of the gap between the member and his constituents; thus, the whole matter of 'representation' re-emerges, and the observations of Eulau (1962), Hill (1974) and Stanyer (1971) are particularly pertinent. The more meaningful dialogue between councillors and the professional staff that is becoming possible, particularly as a direct result of the educational programmes perhaps unwittingly contributed to by the local council's technical staff, may be accommodated in the more sophisticated decision-making processes emerging from the work of such

<sup>(8)</sup> Lee (1963), pp. 139, 141-3.

as the Institute of Operational Research. These processes operationally help to overcome the dilemma of the distinction sometimes naively made between policy formulation and its execution, and facilitate the temporary transience of the professional staff and the elected members from one poorly differentiated role to another; but in so doing, this may confuse and frustrate the identification of the occasions and matters in the total decision-making process which might properly be the subject of public intervention in the form of participation.

Eulau and Prewitt (1973) have described another dilemma: the larger the city, and the more complex its activities, the greater is the likelihood that the elected members and their professional advisors will become centripetally oriented, developing a network of social relationships and decision-making styles and practices conducive to internal adaptation but confusing and frustrating to the external environment and its actors; the small city, however, develops very different social and decision-making linkages, no less centripetally oriented and capable of adaptation, but either 'open' to the external environment, or more tightly closed.

In both of these situations, that is, with a better informed elected membership and a more closely integrated decision environment of representatives and professional staff, the interpretation of 'maximum feasible participation' may be determined more by "two's company, three's a crowd", than by Oscar Wilde's comment that "in married life three is company and two is none". The new methods of government, at all levels, tend to require centralisation of decision-making functions; and this is occurring at a time in the development of the Western democratic system when, outside the decision-making forum, there are increasing demands for decentralisation and for more popular control. Both tendencies advocate efficiency, but interpret it differently. In this section, the perceptions and competences of the elected members have been briefly reviewed, and it has emerged that the broad spectrum of the role prescription is being progressively accommodated. There are certainly reservations and exceptions to this assessment; however, the situation is scarcely conducive to the extension of meaningful opportunities for public involvement, and the concern this raises is particularly acute in the



conduct of urban and regional planning, because it is no more likely that the role prescription of the professional staff of government, the public servants, and its accommodation, is conducive to the extension of the *real* decision-making environment to encompass the layman.

*The Public Servants—the  
Professional Staff*

As with most of the other concepts considered in this book, there is a lack of consensus on the definition and ramifications of 'the bureaucracy'; thus, any discussion of the persons operating within "the institutionalised means for the process of negotiation and for the resolution of conflicts",<sup>(9)</sup> and the roles performed by them is fraught with difficulty, and almost certainly capable of being expressed in terms and in contexts prejudicial to other interpretations. For example, there are two distinctly polarised views, and although most social and political commentators range along the continuum between these two, it is necessary to be aware of the extent of the division between them, particularly as they often represent the contrary interpretation of the bureaucrats and of the consumers of the bureaucratic service. Michels (1915) has succinctly described the two views: on the one hand, it may be held that democratic social action is rendered possible only through the medium of a bureaucratic organisation, and on the other, that it is precisely that organisational form which is potentially destructive of democratic values.<sup>(10)</sup> The same observations are made in the works of Weber, his successors and contemporaries, that, simultaneously, the bureaucratic organisation is the embodiment of rationality and objectivity, is free from political taint, and is therefore intrinsically superior to any other form of organisation, but it is also an institutionalised means capable of 'enslaving' the public.

The growth of the professional staffs in government seems inevitable, particularly if the contributory factors are the increasing demands of service from government by the public, the increasing

<sup>(9)</sup> Warwick (1974), p. 113.

<sup>(10)</sup> Reported in Crozier (1974), p. 176.

size of organisational units, the impact of cultural, economic and technological developments, the increasing trend of satisfying the generated needs of human and social welfare; but, it is the unrivalled technical superiority of this form of organisation that has primarily brought about its adoption in modern government.<sup>(11)</sup> Warwick (1974) has commented that, ultimately, considerations of bureaucratisation are also considerations of power, and this renders this brief introduction to the investigation of the professional public servants to practices of participation in decision-making in urban and regional planning of significance. In the previous discussion of the elected members in local government it was pointed out that decision-making at that level was perceptibly a co-operative venture, with the professional staff holding the brief for rationality, objectivity, consistency and comprehensiveness, while the politicians courted the notions of expediency, subjectivity and interest-orientations. It is this co-operativeness that militates against intervention in the process by other aspiring participant groups. Alford (1969), in his preliminary consideration of bureaucracy and participation, refers to the flexibility harboured by the professional staffs in local government, a manoeuvrability to promote broadly-based or narrowly-defined interests on particular issues; he suggests it is this uncertainty of course of action that generates the reasonable demand for popularly-based participation practices to contribute balance to the deliberations. The need for such practices seems to expand as the services required of government leads to the proliferation of new professions.<sup>(12)</sup> For urban and regional planning, the growth of the bureaucracy seems inevitable, particularly because, as the tentacles of planning extend across many dimensions of governmental activity in the realms of social welfare which have a physical expression, the proliferation of government departments or sections dealing with planning grow in amoebic fashion (Sharp, 1969).

A recent attempt has been made to define the bureaucratic service as a representational one (Krislov, 1974); thirty years previously the

<sup>(11)</sup> Weber—in *Economy and Society, an Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. by G. Roth and C. Wittich (1968), Bedminster Press, N.Y. vol. III, p. 973.

<sup>(12)</sup> Alford (1969) makes specific mention of the emergence of urban and regional planning and traffic engineering (p. 18).

American public service had been described as representative of the public at large, and commended the 'practice' as a guarantee of responsiveness and obedience to political tides, and as an assurance that the predisposition of the bureaucrat to become insulated and isolated is neutralised. This raises the matters of the motivating forces and the lines of guidance for bureaucratic action.

*Moral commitments.* For many years, planners have been accused of holding professionally-oriented 'middle class' values, and of attempting to impose them on other sections of the community whose value-systems are significantly different. It is significant to note in this connection, that between them, Downs (1967), and Dickson (1968) have advanced a moralistic interpretation of the motivations of the bureaucrat. Four items from their joint list are relevant to this study: these are the commitments to (1) influence those interests not specifically reflected in the composition of the 'bureau' (i.e. the professional and the political branches of government) to support or to concede to the propositions of the government; (2) develop a consensus within the bureau and between it and the interested parties to a particular matter; (3) provide an alternative means of decision-making should the conventional political forum prove to be ineffective; and (4) initiate crusades as 'moral entrepreneurs'. These commitments are essentially part of the democratic creed. Their relevance to urban and regional planning is rendered significant in the light of the emergence of the planning profession. Frost (1974) has observed that the profession of urban and regional planning has hardly existed as an occupation independent of a bureaucratic employer.<sup>(13)</sup> "The history of town planning is largely that of government intervention into urban development, and the scope of town planning has been restricted by the availability of planning power in the legislative framework. The position of town planners in local government is illustrative of the general problems faced by professionals in bureaucracies."<sup>(14)</sup> It is hardly surprising, therefore, that much planning work is locationally and culturally unsympathetic and socially irrelevant, as it strives for rationality and objectivity in a

<sup>(13)</sup> This is particularly true of the British situation; it is not so valid for other planning systems in other nations.

<sup>(14)</sup> Frost (1974), p. 578.

procedural framework. This dilemma pervades the radicalism of those anxious to extend the decision-making franchise to the public; the involvement of the untutored, and those unused to the manipulations intrinsically part of the political process, might prejudice the decision-making performance. It is the exceptional powers of implementation which render the social responsibility of the planner of such great significance, and it would be unreasonable to assume that the planner would readily share those powers with the laity.

Amos (1968) poses the dilemma frequently encountered by the planner: in his work, it is necessary to carefully weigh the expectation of society of his contribution, and the co-operation that may be reasonably expected of the public. This raises a multitude of philosophical questions, and it introduces the spectre of the planner being susceptible to manipulation by political and economic forces. An attempt to fit urban and regional planning into the broader professional framework has been made by Howard (1955), whose "structure of interlocked philosophies" has been proposed as a parallel of motivations to those of most other professions. He has identified three prerequisites, which jointly comprise the philosophical justification and motivation for urban and regional planning. The three prerequisites are commitments to an existential philosophy of society, to a democratic order of government, and to a personal philosophy that "in a modest way he (i.e. the planner) could ... contribute a little toward the preservation of human kind and existence."<sup>(15)</sup> Howard's view is that such a philosophy inescapably places upon the planner the responsibility to use his expertise for the benefit of society: "we most firmly believe that our own particular professional skills, imperfect as they may be, are an essential aid to the various levels of government in our country, in their services to society, toward providing a physical environment within which every individual may more fully enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."<sup>(16)</sup> It is the moral commitment to improve the social condition that legitimises the actions of planning; it is the authority justifying the intervention (Rein, 1969). In this respect it is not appropriate to separately identify the planner as a bureaucrat and the politician as the repre-

<sup>(15)</sup> Neutra (1954), *Survival Through Design*; quoted by Howard (1955), p. 62.

<sup>(16)</sup> Howard (1955), p. 65.

sentative of the sovereign voters, because the scope and complexity of the decision process in planning renders separateness a meaningless and artificial classification. The authority to intervene is delegated in a complicated and imprecise way from the electorate through the representative to the professional expert; it is at the point of implementation, or assumption of decision-making responsibility that the planner needs to be aware of his credo. Yet the philosophy by which any planner abides has not achieved unqualified legitimation: "we have no final answers to the moral dilemmas presented by the conflicting values we seek to realize."<sup>(17)</sup>

The moral commitment, or at least the dimension of it referred to as the 'value-neutral' has been challenged by Singer (1971). He alleges that the 'straw man' implicitly created by the requirements of the rational planning process, the planner who is capable of considering, evaluating and ranking all the possible alternatives in a totally dispassionate value-free fashion is substantially unreal;<sup>(18)</sup> in addition, Singer suggests that such a technical expert would be undesirable, even if he were to exist. The import of Singer's discussion is that the planner as value-neutral is a myth; the moral commitment to planning is a significant denial of the value-neutral thesis. Thus, by challenging the trend towards rationality and scientific dispassion, Singer is largely supporting the contentions of other commentators on the *raison d'être* of planning and the motivations of planners, that the planner is guided by socialistic intentions (Marcus, 1971) to pursue the role of the 'moral entrepreneur'. Later in this section, evidence is given that, in British planning schools at least, there is not an obvious commitment to training in the arts and crafts of participatory decision-making practices; Singer sets out a case in favour of such preparation for practice, particularly as it could contribute to the professional's awareness of the possible superiority of value-based pluralistic planning over any of the more distant and "poor fit" rational approaches persistently advocated. This view has been variously supported: Bor (1969), in his review of participatory exercises in three very different planmaking situations (urban renewal, city centre redevelopment and conservation, and new town develop-

<sup>(17)</sup> Rein (1969), p. 243.

<sup>(18)</sup> Singer likens such a planner to 'Dr. Strangelove' (p. 107).

ment) has remarked that "planners will have to sharpen their political understanding and ability to talk to people, reply to comments and cope with criticism."<sup>(19)</sup> Bolan (1971) has asserted that the planner operates in the community decision-making network as the agent of his client, and that his fundamental objective is to bring about change in the wider community to the benefit of his client. This crusading enterprise is most highly developed by the advocacy planners, to whom reference will be made later in this chapter; as a common denominator of moral commitment, Bolan has remarked that "to prepare a plan is to promote a cause".<sup>(20)</sup>

Perhaps the most complete discussion of the commitment implicit in urban and regional planning is the interpretation of Friedmann (1966). In his consideration of planning as a vocation, he identifies two complementary conceptual interpretations of planning, one of which is ideological, and which may be simply translated as a moral commitment to the introduction of order ("self-direction") to the evolution of the social system.<sup>(21)</sup> In the development of his analysis of the vocational interpretation of planning, he resorts to Weber's twofold assessment of a vocation, and suggests that "as vocation, planning has therefore the capacity to fill one's professional life with a transcending purpose",<sup>(22)</sup> a purpose which dictates his selection of problems to be solved, his method of operation and the bias of his solutions. The esteem attached to this ideology of planning<sup>(23)</sup> may be attributed to its variable conception as a means for social reform, for utopian cogitation, for the establishment of physical and social norms, for extending the scope of societal order and rationality, and for developing the dispersion of power in society. It is the potential for innovation, for contributing to the movement towards change in society, from both the emotive and the rational points of view that presents the real challenge to planning; yet, despite its ideologi-

<sup>(19)</sup> Bor (1969), p. 79.

<sup>(20)</sup> Bolan (1971), p. 395.

<sup>(21)</sup> This is explicit in the writings of Karl Mannheim (see, for example, *Ideology and Utopia*, N.Y., Harcourt, Brace; 1949).

<sup>(22)</sup> Friedmann (1966), p. 101.

<sup>(23)</sup> Friedmann claims that the 'dignity' pervading planning is largely the result of the intellectual conflict waged by Mannheim, Mumford and Tugwell on the one hand, and van Hayek, Popper and van Mises on the other (p. 118).

cal basis, with its propensity for radicalism, Friedmann has adjudged planning in its practical expression to be essentially incremental and conservative. This does not deny the moralistic flavour of the planning function, but tempers it with realism, with attention to the slow progression of rational behaviour rather than to the opportunism of politics. The rational tendency in planning fortunately accommodates, and possibly fosters, the capacity to afford the means to make decisions, both the process, and the creed of reformism.

*The planning competence.* It is possibly the over-enthusiastic indulgence in moralistic crusades that renders the planner susceptible to allegations of imposing his own conceptions and life-style valuations on societies which are too differentiated to succumb without raising some objection. But, there is a further dimension to the crusading ventures, and that is the competence of the planner to do what is expected of him, and what he requires of himself. It is not proposed here to discuss the particular skills and expertise claimed by planners; although it has not been done particularly well, such matters have exercised some commentators on planning, and have certainly been the subject of considerable debate within the national professional planning institutes.<sup>(24)</sup> However, some comment is necessary on the competence of the planner, if only to afford some measure of comparison with the other participants which have been previously, or will be subsequently discussed.

A study conducted by Marcus (1971) attempted to reveal the essential characteristics of the planning profession in Britain. From the study it is possible to draw an image of the planner stereotype in respect of his academic and professional qualifications, his likely social background (i.e. education, parental education, background and occupation), his views on planning education, and the differentiation of 'work setting', duties, income and assumption of responsibility. Of particular interest to the central matter of this book are the responses to the invitation to cite the main sources of frustration. The principal sources appear to be at the interface of political and

<sup>(24)</sup> For example: Eversley (1973), *Town Planners and their Future*, Royal Town Planning Institute (1971), London; *Royal Australian Planning Institute Journal* (whole edition) vol. 10, no. 2 (April) 1972.

technical action, with comments referring to the lack of political consistency, the burden of national directives, and the local planning committees. As that study was conducted before the impact of the Skeffington recommendations was being widely experienced it is not surprising to find a lack of specific comment on public involvement in the planning process; however, the omens are detectable in the references to the nuisance of decisions 'handed-down' from the central planning agency which effectively stifle local level initiative and curb the manoeuvrability often essential in the daily routine of much planning work. In addition, the guarded abhorrence of such directions might well include the reservations of the introduction of widespread participation of the public in plan-making and decision-making situations. A significant cause of frustration seems to be the lack of management ability in professional staff and the lack of internal delegation. These two comments reveal a situation which might seriously impede the conduct of meaningful participation programmes, for, if there is a detectable inability to delegate responsibility within the planning team as conventionally construed, there is unlikely to be any greater ability to delegate some of the decision-forming matters for public scrutiny, comment and commitment. The import of this is that participation of the public is unlikely to be significant because, firstly, there will be little certainty that the public will be involved in a determination of crucial matters, and secondly, and perhaps the reason for the first, there is little likelihood of a competence to deal with public comment no matter how it is made.

Commenting on the Fulton Report (1968), which was specifically concerned with the professional civil service in Britain, Harris (1969) has identified the general attributes of the professional public servant. These are (1) an inherent skill as a result of prolonged training and sustained experience and (2) an awareness, and in some cases a deep knowledge, of the concepts and techniques of the profession which afford a flexibility in thought and action superior to that of any 'outsider'. Harris interprets the role and societal need of the professional public servant more generally than George Bernard Shaw—"all professions are conspiracies against the laity"—although, in his wisdom, Shaw's comment is not without appropriateness. The professional attracts to himself a certain charisma, a mystique, largely



the byproduct of the nature of his accreditation by learned societies, statutory councils or chartered institutions, and not insubstantially the result of public deference to 'the expert'.<sup>(25)</sup> This deferential attitude is scarcely avoidable, because one of the more commonly agreed propositions is that the professional's role includes the bringing to bear on the determination and execution of policy at all levels of government, expert knowledge, skill and experience in specialist fields. In the discharging of their tasks, the professionals have frequently to apply many of the dimensions of their 'kit-bag' of skills, not the least of which is the maintenance of a continuous dialogue between industry, local and central government, statutory authorities, the universities and research institutions, and with the parent professional bodies. Harris has remarked that this necessary dialogue "can only be conducted by those who speak the particular language,"<sup>(26)</sup> but, there is not a consensus on what this 'common' language might be.<sup>(27)</sup> There can be little doubt that the differential rate of advancement of planning theory and practice and of general education is not contributing to the closure of the gap between the planner and the planned.

In respect of the differential competence of planners and the public, and in an amusing explosion of the deference concept, Clapham (1970) has described the planner from two viewpoints: firstly, the planner as seen by the public, and secondly, as he sees himself. Both descriptions accord with the view that "the planner is a very special person indeed", but their routes to that description are singularly different. The tone of the discussion is set in the opening sentences of each: firstly, "a planner is a close relative of the Income Tax Inspector. He has no personal relatives since his parentage is doubtful", and secondly, "all planners are direct descendants from Solomon and are closely related to Einstein, St. John and Gordon Banks". From these introductory comments Clapham successfully satirises the intellectual and sartorial characteristics of the planner, his effi-

<sup>(25)</sup> There is, of course, a contrary view to this (Clapham, 1970).

<sup>(26)</sup> Harris (1969), p. 36.

<sup>(27)</sup> For example, it is not infrequent for planning journals to carry correspondence deprecating the direction the craft seems to be pursuing. Typical is the letter to the editor "Planning Twaddle"—*Journal, Royal Town Planning Institute*, vol. 57, no. 2 (February) 1971, p. 87.

ciency and his talents, the sense of humour related to the frustrations of his work, his particular vocabulary and willingness to accept responsibility. The relevance of some aspects of his range of skills has been subjected to scrutiny and critical comment: Hadden (1974) has exposed the fallacy of the wholesale adoption of currently fashionable planning packages in ignorance of the critical dynamic features of the local situation; Eversley (1973) has argued that many of the planner's skills are redundant because of changed circumstances in the planning and social systems.

For practices of citizen participation to be meaningful to the participants, and for the emerging contributions to be usable in the resolution of plans and other planning decisions, it is presumably necessary for those responsible for defining the structure of the programme of participation to be conversant with the various dimensions of the concept and its practical ramifications. This, essentially, is the purpose of this book. There is growing evidence of the application of practices tried in one location, in another, without any obvious revision to accommodate the peculiarities of the second location and the omission of practice components dictated by the atypical nature of the first. Current co-ordinated research in Britain<sup>(28)</sup> may contribute to an improved understanding of the variables in the situations in which extended participation is both desirable and possible; but such effort needs to be reinforced by the training of planners specifically for professional involvement in programmes of citizen participation in the planning process.

*Education of planners for citizen participation.* One of the Cinderellas of the story of citizen participation is the distinct problem of how to prepare planners to cope with the public's contribution, with the public, and with the associated complex decision processes. Despite the increasing levels of attention being given to the managerial aspects of the planner's work, there appears to be an insufficiency of attention given to the preparation of planners in the wiles of participatory democracy. An investigation of the established and profes-

<sup>(28)</sup> A study of participation practices in structure planning has been promoted by DOE (Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning, co-ordinated at the Department of Extramural Studies, University of Sheffield).

sionally recognised planning schools in Britain (Fagence, 1975) has revealed a differential, but generally low performance in the specific preparation for, and the inculcation of the skills necessary for the conduct of meaningful participation practices.

The investigation covered twenty-one departments or schools offering courses in urban and regional planning at the tertiary level which were eligible for exemption from all or substantial parts of the qualifying examination of the Royal Town Planning Institute. It was conducted by means of a postal questionnaire, and it achieved eighteen responses (85.7%). The questionnaire was composed of six simple questions. Firstly, information was sought on the communication skills taught during the course. In the second question, information was sought on the means by which the students were informed of and learned about the practices of citizen participation. This was followed by a question concerned to establish the degree to which the students and the teaching staff became involved in participation programmes in an advocacy capacity. Fourthly, to facilitate a means for future discussion, clarification and elaboration, the names were sought of staff in each institution that were particularly interested in the subject of citizen participation in the planning process. The fifth and sixth questions sought views of the correspondent on the adequacy of preparation of the students for professional involvement in participation practices, with a specification of what, if any, inadequacies were prevalent. In only a few cases did the head of the department conspicuously delegate the responsibility for completing the questionnaire to one of his staff; thus, it might be assumed that the picture that emerges is an authoritative one. The results of the investigation are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Seven skills of communication were specifically identified, some concerned with graphics, others with report writing and production, and others with verbal communication. Few planning schools reported conscious training in many of these, and a frequent response where no training was given in one or more of the skills was that students were expected to develop their own expression of the skills by their experience of simulated practice. Despite commendable attention to particular skills, the investigation revealed a general failure to develop graphic skills and report writing styles which would

successfully communicate with an audience of laymen. In addition, it remains a cause of concern that training in responding in a media interview has not yet found its way into the communication syllabus. In summarising the performance of the respondent institutions it is necessary to concede that each planner does not need to be comprehensively competent; however, it should be realised that, with the increasing exposure of planning practice to public scrutiny it is becoming more difficult to hide or protect planners from themselves, from the drawing-board, from the council, committee and public meeting, or from media interviews. It is conceivable that participation exercises would be more meaningful and productive, and less traumatic for all participants, if the professional planner is equipped with considerable graphic and verbal skills.

The second question sought to establish the medium through which the students become familiar with the intricacies of the growing volume of case studies of participation exercises. A high commitment to the formal introduction of case studies to the students by the teaching staff, a commitment met almost equally by the use of the lecture, the seminar and the tutorial. The degree to which any study is undertaken voluntarily by the student appears conditioned by his personal political motivation and by the commitment of the tutors. A modicum of experience of the 'real thing' was encouraged in about one-half of the respondent institutions, but there emerged in the responses to this question a regrettable lack of recognition of the wider philosophical and political background to the concept of participation and the myriad ramifications in its operationalisation. This confusion was also communicated in the responses to the question on the practical experience of advocacy planning sought and achieved by the students and the teaching staff. Although only one respondent declared a difficulty in consistently interpreting the term 'advocacy', most others obviously innocently interpreted the term to cover both the situations of representing the usually ignored underprivileged community groups and the conventional private consultancy. A recent bibliography of sources on advocacy planning has referred to the exercise of 'clinical advocacy';<sup>(29)</sup> this matter is referred to more specifically later.

<sup>(29)</sup> Mazziotti (1972).

It is interesting to note that of the eighteen responses, eight indicated their course may be generally considered adequate in the preparation of students for competent practice in participation programmes, while ten conceded a level of inadequacy. The use of the descriptive term 'adequate' required the exercise of value-judgement, an exercise which could not possibly achieve a consensus interpretation without resort to some meaningful quantitative measure.

However, a number of general inadequacies were commented upon with sufficient repetition for an assessment to be made that they represent a common core of inadequacy in most planning courses. Inadequacy was generally conceded in respect of (a) the knowledge of the philosophy and psychology of democratic participation; (b) the definition and analysis of the various participant roles; (c) experience of the 'real thing' by the teaching staff; and (d) prejudicial preconceptions of the practice by students and the staff (i.e. predispositions of élitism, paternalism, and cynicism).

Just as every planner cannot be expected to be equally competent as a designer, an analyst, a model-builder, a diplomat, and so on, it is unreasonable to expect every planner to be sympathetic to or conversant with the complex cultural issues of citizen participation. Perhaps the endeavours to prepare all students for involvement in participation programmes are misplaced and based on false premises, and perhaps competence in participation philosophy and practice requires special attitudes and aptitudes. This speculation could continue almost indefinitely. The unmistakable message from the survey of British planning schools is that the progress recently made in many other areas of planning education (i.e. in quantitative methods, in the application of scientific and management aids to decision-making) has not been achieved in the political dimensions of planning practice. Thus, despite the expression of such attitudes as "I believe they (i.e. the students) are prepared competently as professionals which includes good basic attitudes towards the various public and private relationships they will develop", there is evidence that many students, on their completion of the period of formal planning training at a tertiary institution, lack the necessary *acute* appreciation of the philosophy, the psychology and the mechanisms of participa-

tory democracy. In such a situation they will need all their inherent charismatic qualities just to survive.

*The built environment professions.* In concluding this brief examination of the role of the planner, and many of its ramifications, it is probably appropriate to succinctly comment upon the dilemma of dysfunction among the professions. The planning profession, as it is differentiated by its charter and the Royal Institute, is used to having its status critically reviewed;<sup>(30)</sup> the parent Institute has itself contributed to the definitional exercises, identifying the spheres of activity which can most satisfactorily be undertaken by a 'genuine' planner, and those areas to which other academic disciplines and professions may make important contributions. There is a tendency however, for the boundaries of the professions concerned with the built and natural environment to extend into the territory of expertise until recently easily identified as peculiar to one or other of the existing professions. The complexity of the analytical and policy-making exercises has rendered such sharp divisions to be inadequate and inappropriate. This is the essential message from the colloquy recently contributed to by a variety of commentators on the processes and practice of urban and regional planning.<sup>(31)</sup> One of the contributors remarked that despite the collaboration experienced in multi-disciplinary/professional teams, "the professional bodies maintain a polite but continuous struggle for absolute influence in the areas where their concerns overlap",<sup>(32)</sup> and another has asserted that this internecine territorial struggle is of little significance to "the ubiquitous man in the street".<sup>(33)</sup>

Frost (1974) has recently attempted a validation of the hypothesis that the recently developed professions, such as urban and regional planning are less able to exert the authority and autonomy of the classical professions of law, and medicine. His view is that the plan-

<sup>(30)</sup> Cherry (1974) has recorded the fluctuating factions of the Institute, and the variety of disturbances which have beset the evolution of the planning profession in Britain.

<sup>(31)</sup> *Built Environment*, 'Built Environment Professions: What's in a name?' March 1975, pp. 120-33.

<sup>(32)</sup> Law, *Built Environment* colloquy, p. 127.

<sup>(33)</sup> Goodey, *Built Environment* colloquy, p. 124.

ning profession in particular has suffered from the trend of local government business to be departmentalised; this specialisation of function has been detrimental to planning, the peculiar contribution of which is comprehensiveness of treatment, because it has been denied (or, has denied itself) a specific action-oriented capability. "... apart from development control work planners are rarely involved either in the execution of their plans or with the management of schemes when completed. These functions are the responsibility of other departments."<sup>(34)</sup> Muchnick (1970) has also commented upon this dilemma.

The potential competence of the planner has improved considerably in recent years; but, Eversley (1975) has pointed to the likely changes in the context into which planning fits, changes which will necessitate the development of "new, but less sophisticated, technical skills ... (a) new attitude of mind, and a new value system",<sup>(35)</sup> whilst Moss (1975) has cynically projected the likelihood of planners continuing to produce larger and more comprehensive reports, to be read by less people, with planning techniques and tools becoming more refined and the planning process becoming more sophisticated and more abstract. It is suggested that the proliferation of professions and academic disciplines into the sphere of environmental study and practice will not render the situation more comprehensible or more realistic; perhaps the converse is the most likely development.<sup>(36)</sup>

<sup>(34)</sup> Frost (1974), p. 579.

<sup>(35)</sup> Eversley (1975), p. 16.

<sup>(36)</sup> Mullins (1975), 'The Physical Environment Professions and the Australian Environmental Crisis'. Final draft paper for publication in Boreham, Pemberton, and Wilson (eds.), *The Professions in Australia: A Critical Appraisal* to be published by University of Queensland Press. Mullins has argued that "the environmental difficulties perceived to exist within Australia are not being met by the environment professions because of the discrepancies existing between professional ideology and professional practice. Furthermore, changes within these professions are likely to occur because of the increasing numbers of people opposing the imposition of plans they deem as undesirable, because the environment professions are beginning to look at their own practices and because governments are demanding a wider range of skills to solve environmental and related social problems. Under these conditions new skills are developing which will not have the tightly knit occupational grouping of professionalism. Conservatism inherent in professionalism has placed barriers against any radical change in environmental planning. New non-professionalized occupational skills may overcome this and allow for broader, less elitist, less change resistant and less centralizing physical planning."

*The Public(s)*

An attempt was made early in the Skeffington Report (1969) to define 'the public': "We do not think of the public solely in terms of the community as it shows itself in organised groups. We regard the community as an aggregate comprising all individuals and groups within it without limitation."<sup>(37)</sup> This admirable extensive, encyclopaedic definition is substantially rebutted by the lack of participation sought by large sections of the public, despite the validity of the assertion by Aristotle that 'man is by nature a political animal'. Hoinville and Jowell (1972) have commented that, in general, the 'mass' public has not been motivated to participate in the processes of planning, or more generally, decision-making in local government; despite the prolonged intellectual discussions, and the extensive efforts of professional staff in the appropriate departments of local government to provide means by which the public could become involved, the tendency has been for only a small section of the community to accept the challenge and the opportunities. There is evidence that, even for the particularly localised matters, the response of the mass public has been quantitatively small, with the result that these have developed "into the same kinds of battlegrounds for experts and professionally organized pressure groups."<sup>(38)</sup> The effect of the agitated attention given to the matter of citizen participation by professional staff in local government and the local elected representative has been, not an extension of participation, but a crystallisation of better organised activity by the articulate groups, and the increased likelihood of success achieved by their efforts.

Andrews (1974), in his report on the third phase of the preparation of a development strategy for London's docklands, identifies five consumer groups, to which he attaches the description 'publics'. Of these five categories, three were concerned with the established, well-organised and articulate bodies which would be expected to respond meaningfully to any invitations to participate, either an expression of views, or in a more tangible manner. These three categories were comprised of the elected councils, organisations representative of in-

<sup>(37)</sup> Skeffington Report (1969), p. 1.

<sup>(38)</sup> Hoinville and Jowell (1972), p. 159.



dustry, business and labour, and special interest groups generally associated with urban and regional planning (e.g. the Civic Trust, professional and academic institutions). The remaining two groups were distinguished as local associations of particular social, educational, welfare, political, recreational or locational interests, and 'the mass of private individuals' unlikely to be directly reached because of their preference to remain unattached to any formal group. The catalogue of 'publics' cited by Andrews is representative of the gamut of interests to be consulted; however, in the remainder of this examination of the public participants to the planning process, concentration will be focused on the final two categories of Andrews: 'the public' expressed in some organisational form, and 'the public' as an aggregate of differentiated persons none of which is associated with identifiable organisations.

Previously in this book reference has been made to Calhoun's (1971) examination of 'the human material' in processes of decision-making. To briefly restate the situation, he examines the proposition that "there is little point in talking about participatory democracy unless we have reason to believe human beings are capable of it",<sup>(39)</sup> and that experience of co-operative ventures suggests that participatory democracy is beyond the capabilities of the ubiquitous man in the street. From an examination of four perspectives on human nature—the Judaeo-Christian, Marxian, Freudian and Reichian—he postulates that it is the cohesive elements in man that are dominant, that "life seeks harmony with its environment"<sup>(40)</sup> through the causal relationships of symbiosis, mutual aid, empathy and commitment. It is necessary, however, to concede that, despite a perceived willingness to be naturally co-operative, the disruptive or divisive forces in human nature are frequently manifest in a variety of 'aggressive' behaviours: Calhoun has identified these behaviours, and includes in his catalogue of seven, four which are pertinent to the matters of participatory decision-making in planning. These four are, neurotic self-aggrandizement (the pursuit of private interests at the expense of the public interest), simple self-assertion, active non-violence, and, less usually, angry violence. In the conclusion of his examination,

<sup>(39)</sup> Calhoun (1971), p. 27.

<sup>(40)</sup> Calhoun (1971), p. 30.

Calhoun points to the need to plan to overcome the distortion of human nature by social authoritarianism, action which should lead to the development of more co-operative and malleable 'human material'. It is his view that the mass public has, both individually and collectively, the inherent capacity "to change the institutions that have corrupted him";<sup>(41)</sup> Hoinville and Jowell have inferred that without change to the traditional methods of encouragement to participate, there is unlikely to be any success in securing the involvement of those members of the public who are personally embarrassed and ill-equipped to indulge in unfamiliar consultation and discussion practices.

"Who participates in what?" This question has been addressed in various ways by many political sociologists in an attempt to determine the characteristics of the principal participants, the motivation to participate, and the characteristics of those citizens that persistently remain outside the ranks of the intentionally involved public. In the review which follows, particular attention will be paid to the cumulative views of Marshall (1969), Lazar (1971), Verba and Nie (1972), and Hill (1974).

The literature on social participation may be conveniently divided into that interpreting the impact of socio-economic status and that considering the significance of personal life-styles. Almost unanimously the studies examining the relationship of socio-economic status to participation indicate a differential performance according to the perceived social strata. Marshall has commented that this generalisation is validated by the experience of many studies regardless of the indices used to measure both socio-economic status and levels of participatory involvement. The evidence from a proliferation of studies in the United States' context suggests that involvement in formal organisations is positively associated with socio-economic status: the perceived tendencies includes a preference to join organisations of sympathetic political, recreational and economic philosophy, so that the more articulate and better educated tend to be associated with those organisations which concentrate on service and 'civics', while the remaining proportion of the public which commits

<sup>(41)</sup> Calhoun (1971), p. 36.

itself to membership at all identifies itself with the more fraternal, social and recreational associations. These generalisations may be identified in the studies conducted by Axelrod (1956), Bell and Force (1956), Bollens (1961), Bonjean (1966), and Hausknecht (1962). The relationship of status to participation in informal groups is less obvious; and this is likely to be the most important category of participant group in the planning context. Such conspicuous relationships that are identified relate less to membership and more to leadership of the informal groups. Consideration of the leadership phenomena is made later in this section. It is the manual worker that has been exposed to the most perceptive examinations, and from the many studies conducted (e.g. Gans (1963); Berger (1960)), it is generally reported that this 'sub-culture' persistently prefers and relies upon informal associations rather than the more rigorous and demanding formal organisations. For example, Berger has commented that manual workers, whose residence was necessarily geographically changed because of the relocation of the factory, did not assume the characteristics of the white-collar workers with whom they shared the suburb. The message of this is clear: the expectation that a mixture of socio-economic groups will lead to a generally improved participation capability is unlikely to be fulfilled because of the differences of education, civic commitment, and cultural predispositions between the various groups. The mass public is heterogeneous rather than homogeneous.

The significance of prevailing life-style on the commitment to participation should not be ignored. The most complete summaries of studies on the relationship of life-style and socio-political participation are possibly those of Greer published over the period 1956-62. These studies encompassed examinations of both mass society and the peculiarities of suburbia; the results revealed a significant similarity in the levels of participation between the localities of high density-low socio-economic status and low density-high economic status. However, there appear to be sharp differences in the types of participation pursued. Generally, the tendency is for the high density-low socio-economic status groups to join localised groups sharing the same aspirations or suffering similar deprivations and disruptions, whilst the more suburbanised groups are characterised

by an extensive variety of associations not usually specifically concerned with localised issues or interests. For planning, the results of this line of enquiry support the hypothesis that the more 'homely' public is concerned with local issues, whilst the more travelled and extrovert suburban public extends its horizon of interest to the broader environmental and cultural issues of preservation, conservation, community preferences, social welfare provision and so on. The attendance record of any meeting held by a civic society would reveal corroborative evidence. However, in Australia, the fashionable 'green ban' movement has remarkably extended the commitment to previously conceived bastions of middle-class concerns of the usually high density-low socio-economic status groups.

Milbrath's (1965) review of political participation remains one of the principal sources of evidence on the subject. The main purpose of his examination was to attempt an explanation of individual human behaviour in its relationship to prevailing political systems; thus, the unit of analysis was the individual citizen rather than an aggregate expressed as a group type, and rather than the political environment. To communicate his evaluation of the causes of political behaviour—why people perform political acts, and why they select some and not others—Milbrath devised a conceptual model (Fig. 5.1); this is the framework against which the following comments may be interpreted.<sup>(42)</sup> It should be realised at the outset that behaviour is continuous, and that there is no option of 'not behaving': the essential problem for the analyst of human behaviour, and, say, the planner or the politician intent on building a behaviour expectation from the client public, is that any decision is generated as a response to competing stimuli, and it may be almost impossible for *anyone* to be satisfied that he has a perfect knowledge of the full complement of stimuli. To further complicate the patterns of behaviour, it is the interaction of the stimuli with sets of predispositions that ultimately creates the behavioural response which may be observed. Theories of behaviour suggest that certain responses may be predicted with reasonable accuracy because of the accumulation of experience in an individual that certain actions attract 're-

<sup>(42)</sup> See Milbrath (1965), pp. 29–38 for a more complete statement of his analysis.

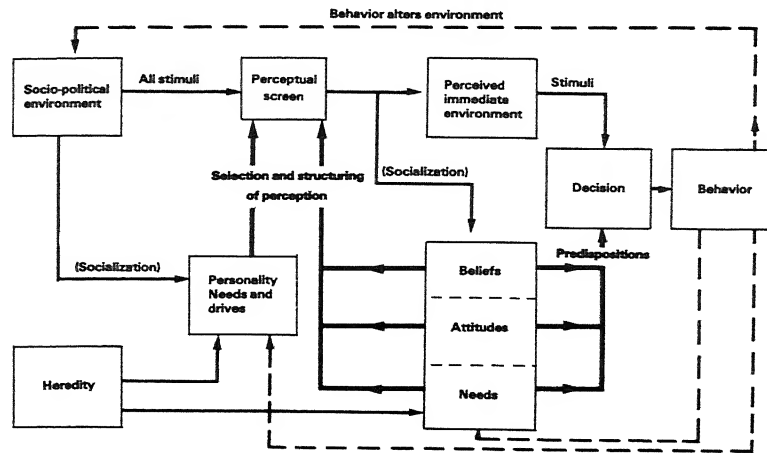


Fig. 5.1. Model for the analysis of individual behavior (based on Milbrath (1965), p. 28).

wards', are pleasurable or satisfying, and have developed 'habit strength'; thus, for the conduct of citizen participation, any means for involvement which contributes tangible or intellectual satisfaction to the participants is likely to become the practice most sought after, and any decision which has been reached in an amicable fashion will itself stimulate a need for further experience of a similar kind. In urban and regional planning the converse seems to have attained 'habit strength'. The disenchantment of the public with the idea of participation has arisen partly because of the failure of some of the means employed to realise meaningful and satisfactory (to the participants) results. Virgil's observation is apposite: "*Hos successus alit: Possunt, quia posse videntur.*"<sup>(43)</sup> The psychology may be extended at this point; the predisposition to be a non-activist may be violated if a particularly strong stimulus crosses the predisposition threshold with sufficient dynamism to cause the individual to reappraise his previous attitudes, and as a result of the cogitation, to become an activist. For planners and politicians to presume that an acquiescent or dormant public will remain in that state no matter what changes

<sup>(43)</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid IV*, 231. ("Success nourished them: they seemed to be able, and so they were able.")

are wrought in the physical and political environment is tantamount to a dereliction of responsibility; most, if not all proposed actions and policies need to be publicly aired to generate a response *before* they are resolved, to obviate the likelihood of unsuspected opposition at a subsequent time. Thus, if for no positive reason, it seems desirable that the public is consulted on planning matters before the stage of resolution is reached, in order to prevent a later exhibition of direct and possibly physical opposition from those persons whose usual predisposition to pacificity has been disturbed by events or actions considered by them to be unacceptable. Milbrath has observed that the human 'black box' is employed to screen and to select those stimuli and predispositions to which it will react and which it will propose through the decision chain to respond to. There is, therefore, another communication dimension here: the inherent selection process, which has so far defied precise revelation, determines which of the stimuli and predispositions are relevant, and likely to reward the required response. In planning, the frequent failure to communicate with those sections of the community it almost desperately seeks, might be due to the inability of the devices used to penetrate the screening process of each individual.

These psycho-social dimensions of the problems of predicting political behaviour are treated in some detail by Milbrath. His attention also extends to a discussion of the impacts, either singularly or in a complementary fashion, of the political and decision-making system in which participation is possible, the socialisation processes, and the standard demographic variables (age, sex, occupation, religion, race, etc.). Most people in Western democratic political systems are taught at some stage during their programmes of education that, in order for democracy to flourish it is necessary for the citizens to be both interested and active; but the performance levels fall far short of that ideal. However, the specialisation of roles that has developed in sympathy with the growth of modern society, has facilitated the creation of the activists and the non-activists, a situation which has not been observed to be seriously prejudicial to the social, economic and political welfare of those who have elected to join the massive body of nonparticipants to political decision-making. The commonly manifest level of popular indifference should not be construed

to be enduring and consistent. Many planning situations have been frustrated because the planners and the politicians have misinterpreted and have failed to anticipate the likely responses of the public.

Hill (1974) has commented upon the variations between citizens which, not only can result in unexpected responses when particular political nerves are touched, but which pose problems of defining, recognising and making attempts to accommodate the different needs. It is necessary to concede that, just with the variable response-generating stimuli previously considered, the debate on the variations in treatment accorded to citizens across the broad spectrum of government activity is exceedingly complex. In order to discuss comprehensively her thesis that the treatment of citizens is unequal, Hill considers three areas of decision-making: policy issues in education and housing, the needs of special groups and areas, and the interference of planning in citizen's rights. In the British system of urban and regional planning the local planning authority is the sole arbiter of land use (i.e. subject to validation of the decisions through the 'reference to higher authority' processes when they are appropriate). This system is conducive to the spontaneous generation of selected antipathies and grievance. "Equity demands that all who have a right to be heard, are heard. Information is, however, clearly unequal as between the citizen, on the one hand, and the bureaucracy on the other."<sup>(44)</sup> It is the inequity of information, and the patent inequity of the availability of ears to listen that motivates some of the deprived sections of the community to proceed from Calhoun's category of active but non-violent political behaviour to one which is more aggressive, angry, obstructive, demonstrative and even violent. Most planners and politicians lack the degree of psychological perception necessary to be forewarned of such likely responses from a commonly docile public.

One of the problems researched by Verba and Nie (1972) in their mammoth study of the political participation of the American people (conducted during 1967) was the identity of the participants. Of particular interest was the matter of the extent to which the activist segment of the community differs from the remainder, or, to what

<sup>(44)</sup> Hill (1974), p. 124.

extent the activists are a representative or a disproportionately-based sample of the population. The answer is crucial because of its impact on the effect of participation on government. If participants are derived proportionately from all sections of the community then the politicians who respond to the participation input will be responding to an accurate representation of the needs, aspirations and preferences of the public at large. However, Verba and Nie discovered what most other similar investigations have revealed, that the participants are hardly representative of the public as a whole, and therefore, the use of the extended means of decision-making can scarcely be used legitimately as a basis upon which to reformulate social and economic policy. The simple extension of the opportunity to participate does not equalise participation rates; despite the equal availability of participation, the fact that the acceptance of the invitation generally remains a matter for voluntary initiative will ensure that some will take more advantage than others of the opportunities presented. Verba and Nie have summarised the predispositions to participate as follows: personal needs and problems, possession of the necessary resources (skills, time, money), conducive attitudes (belief in the importance, effectiveness of political action), civic commitment, social expectation, and conducive institutional structures (formal and informal).

From the information collected during their study of American popular commitment to political participation, Verba and Nie have been able to identify six types of participant and relate each of those to four 'basic sets of political orientations';<sup>(45)</sup> the orientations, characteristics and participant definitions are summarised in Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3. The six types of participant identified were:

1. the inactives;
2. the voting specialists;
3. the parochial participants;
4. the communalists;
5. the campaigners;
6. the complete activists.

<sup>(45)</sup> For a complete consideration of the matters of this paragraph see Verba and Nie, chaps. 5 and 6.



TABLE 5.1. Participant Types: Proportional Division and Main Characteristics

Participant type	Proportion	Main characteristics
Inactives	22%	No activity
Voting specialists	21%	Action betraying little initiative, but performed against counter participants
Parochial participants	4%	Act with initiative, but within narrow limits of interest (personal); little conflict may be experienced
Communalists	20%	Act with initiative, with broad civic interest commitment; little conflict may be experienced
Campaigners	15%	Act with moderate initiative, with broad civic interest commitment; some conflict experienced
Complete activists	11%	Indulgence in all activities, mostly to high level of commitment

Based on Verba and Nie (1972), table 5.1 and pp. 7ff.

Note: 7% of all participants are unclassifiable.

The four basic sets of political orientation were identified as:

- (a) psychological involvement
- (b) skill and competence-subsets
  - = efficacy
  - = information
- (c) involvement in conflict and cleavage-subsets
  - = partisanship
  - = partiality
  - = issue extremity
- (d) civic mindedness.

Psychological involvement in political activity (of which citizen participation in urban and regional planning is logically one important expression) may be interpreted as the extent to which an individual expresses an interest in, and is attentive to political matters.<sup>(46)</sup> The

<sup>(46)</sup> For a review of the central concept of psychological commitment to political activity, and some of the important measurements of the variables see Robinson, Rusk, and Head (1968), *Measures of Political Attitudes*, Ann Arbor (Michigan), Survey Research Centre, University of Michigan.

TABLE 5.2. Performance Level in the 'Basic Sets of Political Orientations' by Participant Type

Political orientations	Inactives	Voting specialists	Participant types			
			Parochial participants	Communalists	Campaigners	Complete activists
Psychological involvement	L	L	L	H	H	H
Skill and competence	L	L	L(1)	H	H	H
(a) Efficacy	L	L	H	H	H	H
(b) Information	L	L				
Involvement in conflict	L	H	L	L	H	H
(a) Party affiliation	L	L	H(2)	H(4)	H	H
(b) Partiality	L	L	—(3)	L	H	H
(c) Extremism	L	L	L	H	H	H
Civic mindedness	L	L	L	H	L	H

L = Low; H = High.

Based on Verba and Nie (1972), tables 5.1, 5.2.

Differences between expected (Table 5.1) and realised (Table 5.2) political orientation: 1. Expectation high; 2. Expectation low; 3. Expectation low; 4. Expectation low.

TABLE 5.3. Representation in Participant Types of Selected Status Characteristics

Demographic profile	Participant types				
	Inactives	Voting special-ists	Parochial participants	Communal-ists	Campaigners
Education:					
Primary or less	O*	O	R	U	U
High school	R	R	O	R	R
Tertiary	U*	U*	U	O	O
Income:					
Low	O*	O	R	U	U
Medium	U	R	R	R	O
High	U*	U	U	O	O
Sex:					
Male	U	U	R	O	O
Female	O	O	R	U	U
Age:					
Under 30	O*	U	O*	U	U*
31-64	U	R	U	R	O
Over 65	R	O	O	U	U*
Race:					
White	U	R	R	R	R
Other	O	R	U	U	R
Religion:					
Protestant	R	R	U	R	R
Catholic	U	O	O*	U	U
Location:					
Rural	R	R	U	O	R
Suburb	U	U	O	O	R
City	R	O	O	U	U

O = over represented; U = under represented; \* = significant excess (either + or -); \*\* = abnormal excess.  
Based on Verba and Nie (1972), figs. 6.1, 6.2, 6.3.

interpretation given to the second set of orientations included an estimation of the extent to which an individual seriously considers he could (if he so wished) influence government decisions (efficacy), and the extent to which he affords evidence of his political skill. The suggestion is made that the personal skill and competence should relate primarily to the degree of initiative required by appropriate political action. Three different measures are indicative of the extent to which the citizen is oriented to the conflictual aspect of politics; briefly, these measures are partisan affiliation to an identifiable political party (and therefore, commitment to its ranks in political controversy), willingness to take orders in conflict situations, and propensity to adopt polarised positions on any issue spectrum. Finally, the fourth political orientation to be identified is concerned with the degree to which the participant considers himself to be a contributor to the welfare of the entire community, not in arrogance, but in genuine concern. It is not claimed that those four sets are exhaustive of the complement of basic contributions to the motivation of participants; however, they signally contribute to a more satisfactory assessment of the performance of the six general classes of participant identified by Verba and Nie.

The *inactives* are those citizens who refrain from participation in political activity because of a lack of interest, a psychological detachment from the power play of politics and decision-making, a poor resource base of skills, and little, if any, commitment to conflict resolution or civic improvement. It is difficult to precisely gauge the proportion of this group, or to be certain that the group is consistent in its numerical strength. The *voting specialists* may be distinguished from other activist groups by their commitment to activity which requires the application of little initiative; their political activity is exhausted by the act of voting. These constrained activists may be characterised by low levels of psychological involvement and efficacy, high levels of party allegiance but low levels of general commitment to controversial matters with an inherent abhorrence of adopting extreme positions. The sense of identification with civic and welfare causes is not highly developed. *Parochial participants* may be identified as those who exhibit a high degree of initiative and commitment to particular issues whilst refraining, deliberately, from participation

in the broader issues of social welfare. The skill and competence levels of this group are moderately high, with their information status generally at a high level but with their efficacy level high in respect of the solution of personal rather than public problems. The *communalists* may be identified as the first group in the hierarchy to be generally engaged across the spectrum of political activity. Individuals in this group may be characterised by high degrees of psychological commitment of efficacy, of information possession, and of civic commitment. Equally prevalent are the characteristics of a low level involvement with political parties, a preference for the centre-ground of the issue spectrum, and no more than a sympathy for one or other sides in a situation of political conflict. It would not be unreasonable to consider the members of this group as both political and apolitical.<sup>(47)</sup> The *campaign activists* are similar to the *communalists* in their degree of psychological involvement in political action, but in other respects there are sharp distinctions to be drawn. This group is composed of individuals who are considerably better informed and are usually more efficacious than the average citizen, are more committed to particular party causes, and who may adopt significantly extreme positions to support general or particular causes differentially. The perceptible bias in their allegiance and loyalty reduces the possibility of their commitment to the welfare of the community as a whole. Finally the *complete activists* are the antithesis of the *inactives*; they register high scores on psychological involvement, sense of efficacy, possession of skill and information, on partisanship and commitment to causes of conflict and cleavage, and simultaneously they possess a high sense of contribution to the general welfare of all citizens. This comprehensive intellectual and physical involvement is a rare occurrence.

It is evident from the analysis of Verba and Nie that the "various types of activists not only act differently, they think differently."<sup>(48)</sup> To complete this consideration of the American survey, mention should briefly be made of the analysis of the activists.

<sup>(47)</sup> Verba and Nie have described them as "people who are active in the public life of the community but who stay out of politics" (p. 91).

<sup>(48)</sup> Verba and Nie (1972), p. 94.

The essential points are worthy of notice:

1. active participants come disproportionately from upper status groups;
2. the more difficult activities are engaged in heavily by the upper status groups;
3. those who limit their political activity to voting come disproportionately from lower status groups;
4. parochial participants come from all status groups, although there is a tendency for those from the upper rungs of the status hierarchy to be less constrained;
5. men are over-represented in the more activist groups;
6. minority (particularly ethnic) groups are commonly over-represented in the least active and the least intellectually challenging aspects of politics; however, despite the manifest tendency to refrain from political activity, when such groups consciously elect to participate their commitment and involvement can attain high levels;
7. those of a Catholic persuasion exhibit a higher commitment to partisan activity and voting than do those of a Protestant persuasion;
8. the suburban and rural areas harbour the more general commitments whilst the city areas usually foster the more radical activists with strong partisan and conflict-prone attitudes, some of which are expressed through the electoral system.

The degree of representation in the various categories of participant of selected status characteristics is summarised in Table 5.3.<sup>(49)</sup>

Much consideration has been given to these matters in the immediately preceding paragraphs because they constitute the essential background to the preparation of the most appropriate means of soliciting citizen participation at all or any of the stages of the planning process. There is a differential relevance in the political orientations to the matters of urban and regional planning, but with the continuing

<sup>(49)</sup> For a complete discussion of the matters referred to in the previous three paragraphs, reference should be made to Verba and Nie (1972) especially chaps 5, 6, 8-13. Similar matters have been discussed in Milbrath (1965), Campbell *et al.* (1966), although the terminology used is often different.

tendency to extend the scope of what was at one time essentially physical planning to the broader dimensions of economic, social and physical policy and development, the appropriateness of Verba and Nie's abbreviated orientation list is increasing in sympathy. For example it is unlikely that any political activity will occur to any individual if he has neither an interest in, nor an appetite for involvement in planning issues; although he might possess relevant skills, either in negotiation or more directly in some professional aspects of planning work he is unlikely to bring them to bear in appropriate situations if he is not predisposed to become involved either through the medium of a political party, or through a personal inclination to actively take sides in a dispute (say, between the local planning authority and an action group). It may be similarly argued that the differences between intellectual and actual commitments to the improvement of social welfare are manifest in the proportion of activists compared with the proportion of the community alleging socialistic persuasion. The planning process will function most efficiently if it recognises the variations in contributions from the different 'publics': the *inactives* are almost omnipresent in most forms of political consideration; the *voting specialists* seem to reserve their stamina for the cyclical elections, and participate little in the general phases of plan formulation and decision-making in the inter-election periods; the *parochial participants* are significant protagonists because they usually confine their attention to planning injustices or inequity, to specific environmental or locational problems, and they seem to attack the planning establishment in cycles, but not necessarily in accordance with a predictable rhythm; the *communalists* may be identified as the persistent 'generalist' adversaries, in persistent dispute with the planning authority and its politicians, usually avoiding the excesses of aggressive behaviours, and conducting their cause in as genteel a fashion as befits such organisations as the Civic Trust, National Trust, Conservation Foundations, and so on; the *campaigners* are the more vociferous and aggressive individuals and groups whose information and skill capacity greatly exceeds that of the parochial participants, but whose predilections for pursuing the local planning authority to achieve a redress of grievance or a revision of policies considered anathema to their (i.e. the campaigner's)

cause are similar; finally, the *complete activists* are those who are committed fulltime to bring about the prosecution of planning, environmental, preservation, conservation, and other less physically oriented policies sympathetic to their interpretation of the satisfactory quality of life.

If the participant proportions established by Verba and Nie are generally valid, not only across other political cultures and systems but also in single areas of the political whole, planners can expect to confront—

- |   |   |          |                                   |
|---|---|----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. a particularly inactive 'public' amounting to 22% of the total (the <i>inactives</i> );  | } | i.e. 43% | persistent indifference           |
| 2. a scarcely more active proportion amounting to 21% (the <i>voting specialists</i> );   |   |          |                                   |
| 3. an innovative, provocative and watchful proportion amounting to 19% (the <i>parochial participants</i> and the <i>campaigners</i> ); |   | i.e. 19% | occasional provocation            |
| 4. a generally competent 'public' with broad civic interest, amounting to 20% (the <i>communalists</i> );                               | } | i.e. 31% | persistent conscious co-operation |
| 5. a persistent, generally competent and watchful proportion, amounting to 11% (the <i>complete activists</i> ).                        |   |          |                                   |

The remaining 7% of unclassifiable participants might engage the attention of the planners intermittently, either in respect of personalised matters, or by way of their support for transient causes. Thus, the planning system may expect a continuing involvement of almost one-third of the total population, with an occasional addition of almost one-fifth; however from a proportion of almost one-half there is unlikely to be measurable involvement. These proportions might be abnormally high, reflecting the general nature of the American study and its assessment of involvement across the broad spectrum of all political activity. It is possible, therefore, that these proportions



are indicative of the best levels of active involvement which may be expected (i.e. 31% persistent conscious co-operation, and 19% occasional provocation), and that the proportion actually refraining from activity will be at least two-fifths and probably will be much greater.<sup>(50)</sup>

*The public as consumers.* In a spirited criticism of the architectural profession, Taylor (1973) has commented that the architects have slowly awakened to their social responsibility; they no longer can justifiably perform technician functions in the resource delivery system identified by Blair,<sup>(51)</sup> nor can they continue to pursue their simple belief in environmental determinism. These élitist characteristics have been challenged by the waves of consumerism that have swept, and which continue to sweep many of the social, economic, political and environmental concerns of everyday living. The essential problem, however, is that for architecture, planning and the other built environment professions, the separation of the commissioning agent from the mass of users, and the divorce of the 'resource delivery system' from its destination, renders a satisfactory performance (from the consumers' viewpoint) most unlikely. One means by which consumer preferences may be identified is the systematic study of user needs; but 'the public' is elusive, and any proposed systematic investigation may be subjected to the prejudices of the activists described in the previous section. There is a strong case, however, to attempt to overcome the prejudices and predilections of the professionals and the politicians in some meaningful way. Even so, the resort to consumer investigations, and an interpretation of the responses, might not lead to more positive evidence upon which to base planning and design decisions; the temptation to indulge in a form of environmental determinism persists, even though, the determinism becomes that of the consumer rather than the designer/producer.

<sup>(50)</sup> In particular participation programmes, non-involvement proportions have been very high: for example, the non-respondents to the 'Goals' questionnaire in Los Angeles (1968) totalled 91.7%; the non-involvement in public meetings in selected subregional studies in England has been assessed in the range 96.56-99.06% (Stringer and Ewans (1974), *Participation through Public Meetings*: Interim paper 2, Linked Research Project into Public Participation in Structure Planning, DOE/University of Sheffield).

<sup>(51)</sup> Cited by Taylor (1973), p. 728.

Lee (1971) has clarified the matter from its psychological perspective; he has suggested that human behaviour is not necessarily a response to the environment, and that it might be conceived more appropriately as a behaviour-environment interaction. No matter which of these viewpoints is adopted by the planner, it is patently clear that the activity of planning cannot be considered complete or properly conceived without a positive social philosophy base.

A persistent difficulty in practices of participation, the achievement of a meaningful and usable expression of consumer ('the public') aspirations, is compounded by two psychological traits; firstly, as evidenced in the conduct of personal interviews, the lay participant is often anxious to respond in accordance with his interpretation of the interviewer's expectation, and secondly the consumer projects 'images' of which he has little (if any) personal experience.<sup>(52)</sup> What notice should be taken by planners of such responses is conjectural.

In a context somewhat removed from physical urban and regional planning Platt (1963) has considered the likely improvement to decision-making if the ultimate client is treated as an individual rather than as a mass. His approach was founded on the belief that even small improvements achieved for one individual will aggregate into a meaningful total; thus for planning, although not specifically examined by Platt, the benefits might accrue in two ways, firstly by providing cumulatively a means by which individual expressions may be heard, and secondly, by designing 'outwards', the total environment might assume a more realistic relationship with each human being. Platt's attention is confined particularly to economic planning, but his comments on 'individualized economic behaviour', i.e. consumerism are capable of easy translation to the sphere of urban and regional planning. In the economic sphere of operations research efforts to determine consumer behaviour, preferences, expectations and intentions have proliferated in the United States and Western Europe. Such research has given shape to development policies and plans, and has provided evidence that consumer stimulation has inci-

<sup>(52)</sup> Cowburn (1960) has reported that, in response to the instruction to 'draw your house', London children who were born and grew up in multi-storey flats, drew a freestanding house with a pitched and tiled roof. 'Popular Housing', *Arena*, September/October, 1960.

mentally (but perhaps deliberately) brought about changes in fashion. The skills of public relations are an inevitable accomplice to the promotion of change, or the entrenchment of the *status quo*. The interest of the consuming public in the concerns of planning is likely to change through time, and aspiration levels will be similarly dynamic, whilst the motivations are likely to remain consistent. It is probably incumbent upon the planner, therefore, to develop the necessary diagnostic skills to determine the motivational forces of his consumers in order to develop his own strategy of containment, of provocation, of support and guidance, of education and encouragement. In order for consumers to be likely participants in any decision-making process, there are basic requirements to be met; these are access to information, means of communication, or satisfactory socio-economic working base, and rewards for meaningful contributions. This last point will be amplified later, but, as many professions confer awards and prizes, and most countries confer some insignia of distinction on its chosen military and civilian contributors to national welfare, it would seem beneficial to stimulate public interest and involvement in the planning process with the prospect of a reward. The opportunity for making such gestures was foreseen by Geddes, and was identified by some respondents to the elected representative survey reported previously in this chapter.

*The public and the law.* Planning statutes are not always helpful in precisely indicating who, or what is involved in the judicial process. For example, there is no clear prescription of who or what 'the public' is, and where the statutes err towards explanation, the language seldom offers a level of clarification above "in such manner and to such persons". With even less legal prescription, the preliminary rounds of citizen participation in most plan-making situations are enjoined by 'the public' either as a spontaneous acceptance of the statutory invitation to lodge an objection or to attend a public meeting, hearing or inquiry, or (and most usually) by representatives or delegates of formal interest groups previously invited. In the British system of planning appeals, there is provision for "the affected parties" to participate, the determination of which people qualify stemming from an interpretation of who owns the land, who is lodg-

ing the application or objection, and who else has an interest in the land or its use. However, the rules of the inquiry confer discretion on the Inspector to allow *any other person* to appear, to give evidence, or to more generally contribute to the proceedings; this provision would facilitate the participation of all the inhabitants of the village of Widdicombe fair.

The British Planning Act of 1971<sup>(53)</sup> includes two indications of likely participants, but the terminology of the statute is capable of liberal interpretation, and might not even afford opportunities for involvement of those most anxious activists. Section 8 of the 1971 Act requires the local planning authority, in its process of preparing a structure plan to "take such steps as will *in their opinion* secure—

- (a) that adequate publicity is given....
- (b) that persons who may be expected to desire an opportunity of making representations ... are made aware that they are entitled to an opportunity of doing so; and
- (c) that such persons are given an adequate opportunity ..."

As a guarantee of the implementation of these provisions the third clause of section 8 requires the local planning authority to report to the Minister "of the authority's consultations with, and consideration of the views of, other persons." The same expressions are used in connection with the local plan process; these are set out in section 12. The crucial matters are the delegation of responsibility for determining (a) what 'adequacy' means, and (b) which are the persons who may be expected to desire an opportunity of making representations. From the statute, therefore, there is no clear reference to the need to afford opportunities to the 'total' public, merely to those expected to be interested. In addition, the opportunity to be involved is expressed as "making representations" rather than participation, and the inference may be drawn that even that level of involvement is to be made available after the plan has been prepared. Perhaps the explanatory Ministry circular 52/72, by urging planning authorities to promulgate a participation timetable, will cause them to reveal their real intentions.

<sup>(53)</sup> See Chapter 6.

Although the planning statutes in Britain apparently afford an open and universal invitation to make representations about various types of plan, the practice commonly followed promotes involvement by the types of 'public' identified by Verba and Nie, and particularly by organised groups.

*The public and pressure groups.* In the present climate of general indifference to the opportunities increasingly presented for involvement in decision-making, the resort to pressure group and interest group activity is to be expected. Such groups have become commonly regarded as normal political phenomena whose activities should logically be included in the democratic process; this has not always been the case, for Rousseau advised that "there should be no partial society within the state",<sup>(54)</sup> sentiments which have been reiterated more recently by Titmuss (1960). Some political commentators have opined that the pressure groups are crucial to the maintenance and survival of political liberty (Finer, 1966; Kornhauser, 1960). It is perhaps necessary to define the term 'pressure group', particularly as there is such a variety of expressions which may be considered by some to be synonyms, but which are more likely to be a sub-group within what Moodie and Studdert-Kennedy (1970) have described as 'the pressure-group universe'. Zeigler (1964), in his examination of interest groups in American society, has suggested that a pressure group "is an organized aggregate which seeks to influence the content of governmental decisions without attempting to place its members in formal governmental capacities."<sup>(55)</sup> This definition is very similar to that offered by Moodie and Studdert-Kennedy, and by Eckstein (1960) in his earlier examination of pressure groups in politics.<sup>(56)</sup> Finer (1966) prefers to use the term 'the lobby' as the umbrella for those groups and associations which endeavour to influence government; but this expression is particularly relevant to the context of United States' politics, whereas elsewhere it is often considered an eccentric term.

<sup>(54)</sup> *The Social Contract*, bk. II, chap. III.

<sup>(55)</sup> Zeigler (1964), p. 30.

<sup>(56)</sup> Moodie and Studdert-Kennedy (1970), p. 60; Eckstein (1960), pp. 9-11.

The diversity of possible pressure groups is bewildering; but, as was suggested a little earlier, not all groups are motivated to bring pressure to bear on government, and a distinction between those that do and those that do not becomes necessary. Pressure groups may be classified as 'interest', 'sectional' or 'functional'. These groups claim to represent recognisable sections or interests in society—for example, a trade union, a profession, council-house tenants—and the membership is precisely ascertainable (i.e. the membership of the union or profession, the number of council-house tenants). Spokesmen for any of these groups can confidently 'represent' the views of the membership; this is regularly done, with union leaders or presidents of professional bodies claiming to articulate the consensus views of thousands of paid-up members. A second broad category of pressure groups is concerned with promotional activity, the promotion of a particular ideal or cause. There is no obvious clientele for these groups; membership is achieved by attracting members of 'the public' because of a consensus of opinion on a specific matter, or because of a general attitude towards a less specific matter. The only precision possible for these groups is the specification of the cause—'preservation of trees along Coronation Drive', 'opposition to the Portswood Link', and so on. The distinction between these groups is important and necessary, because the two basic types require different treatment in their relationship with government, if for no other reason than that the general 'interest' type is often numerically large but contains a very high proportion of sleeping partners, whereas the promotional groups are often numerically small but innovative, vigorous, well informed and persistent over short periods of time. Hill (1974) has observed that some of the promotional pressure groups are cognisant of the need to be well-informed, politically astute, and innovative, and that they use their armoury of political skills in a conscious and deliberate attempt to influence planning decisions. There is, of course, a distinction to be made even within the category of promotional groups; most are defensive, negative and responsive to issues which are considered likely to be prejudicial, whereas a small number are founded upon identifiable ideologies (not necessarily with a party reference—for example, amenity groups seek to promote and preserve 'the good life') and fulfill initia-

tory roles. For example, Ferris (1972) has revealed that in some instances it has been local pressure groups which have identified the most important planning matters needing solution and have proceeded to recommend appropriate solutions, rather than the local council whose real responsibility it was. Such situations reinforce both the dilemma and the tragedy of the current attitudes towards government and participation; there has been success in broadcasting certain views more widely, and some changes in government policy or plans have materialised, but the exercises have not necessarily made either the councillors or the planners more responsive.<sup>(57)</sup>

Few people would seriously contend that group interests are irrelevant or unimportant. Key has possibly overstated their significance: "At bottom, group interests are the animating forces in the political process .... The exercise of the power of governance consists in large degree in the advancement of legitimate group objectives",<sup>(58)</sup> and it is such overemphasis that causes a reappraisal to be made of the use the public may make of this particular form of participation. Three uses may be identified, though doubtless these do not exhaust the range: the three are (1) a means of dynamic communication with government, both politicians and bureaucrats, with an attachment of weight of numbers to particular causes and issues or objections; (2) a means of bargaining in the public sector for the allocation (or creation) of material, financial and human resources; and (3) a means of 'collecting' and organising into an effective force individual members of the heterogeneous public which might otherwise suffer their frustrations, indignations, deprivations and grievances without expectation of improvement or redress.

The literature on pressure groups is voluminous, extending from the psycho-social dimensions of interest group theory, through examinations of the relationship between leaders and the led, the place of pressure groups in the political process, the relationship between

<sup>(57)</sup> This point is made by Hill (1974) in her examination of democratic theory and local government, and Styles (1971) in his insistence that participation should be considered in a wider Governmental context than solely urban and regional planning.

<sup>(58)</sup> Key, cited in Zisk (1969), p. 2.

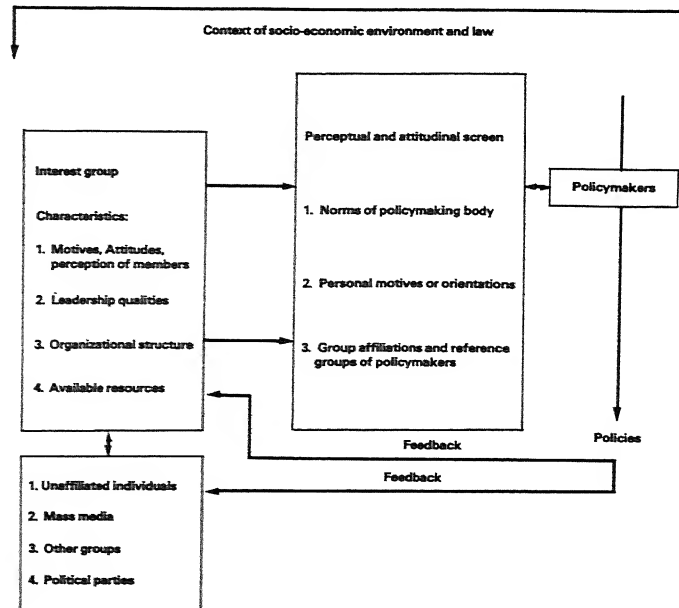


Fig. 5.2. The interest group in the political process (based on Zisk (1969), p. 7).

individuals and groups, to an exhausting catalogue of case studies;<sup>(59)</sup> the subject is also fascinating, and its study would be likely to amply repay any effort made, not only for interest's sake, but also for the benefits likely to accrue in awareness of how to manipulate the groups from inside, and from the position of final decision-making responsibility, the council. Space is too short in this book to comment further on the subject save for a brief mention of the interrelationships of individual members of the public with the pressure groups.

Zisk (1969) has identified a framework against which the study of pressure groups in the political process may be ordered; Fig. 5.2 is based on her conceptual diagram. Just as the policy-makers from the political parties and the bureaucracy conjure an image of the pres-

<sup>(59)</sup> Three useful introductory works are Zeigler (1964); the collection of papers edited by Zisk (1969); and the essay of Moodie and Studdert-Kennedy (1970).



sure group, and are subjected to a considered impact from it, so is the individual citizen; the range of responses are similar too. The policy-maker and the individual may respond sympathetically to the cause being promoted and adopt it (the policy-maker) or become identified with it (the citizen), or they may respond antithetically to ignore or suppress it (the policy-maker) or become apathetic towards it (the citizen). Any or all of these attitudes might be the outcome of the issue being promoted or the composition and evolutionary characteristics of the group. With reference to the latter of these, Zisk's conceptual diagram is helpful in identifying the sources of possible antithesis from the 'external' groups to be persuaded. The internal characteristics of pressure groups reflect the common demographic indicators (socio-economic status, motivations, attitudes and perceptions, available resources, inherent leadership qualities) and the organisation assumed to pursue the group's objectives. A second area of impact on the group is the political context created by political parties, the mass media, other pressure groups and 'unaffiliated individuals'. Then, having an overall impact, is the prevailing socio-economic environment and legal framework. These three areas of impact fashion the group; but before it (i.e. the group) proceeds to engage the policy-making body, or before it endeavours to market itself to the public, the group subjects itself (perhaps not always or not always consciously) to a screening process.

Thus, it is frequently the 'screened' pressure group that is publicly manifested.

The importance for planning of pressure groups cannot be overstated; they may be positively provocative, drawing attention to failures in the prevailing consciousness of the politicians and the planners on specific planning issues, or raising alternative viewpoints that deserve public consideration and debate; on the other hand, such groups may frustrate the execution of particular planning policies for reasons which may be doubtful in the public interest. This is the ultimate criterion to be satisfied: is the motivation and the effect of the action undertaken by a pressure group consistent with the wider public interest, or is it contributory only to the furtherance of particularised interests? It is for the elected representatives, the planner-bureaucrat, the 'external' levels of government *and* the indivi-

dual citizen to determine the real answer to this question before making any moves to accommodate or to be associated with the promotions of any pressure group.

"*Every Citizen a City Planner*". van Cleef (1966), in his brief promotional essay, has restated an obvious but frequently overlooked dimension of the public's competence to participate meaningfully in some aspects of urban and regional planning. He suggests that few citizens are aware that by their own predispositions to plan they have a previously declared preference for the conduct of planning, despite the allegations they frequently make that the planning done by someone else, and particularly by local government constitutes an interference with their inalienable rights and privileges. He cites the case of a local resident in Columbus, Ohio, who, by his own efforts, and example and enthusiasm caused to be brought into effect a policy from the city council to rehabilitate the neighbourhood first established by German immigrants. It may not be always possible to accommodate the ideas and proposals of single citizens, or of promotional groups: planning, if not by definition, in spirit involves compromise between sometimes contradictory alternatives. To conclude his advocacy of participatory planning, van Cleef observes that, to attain a successful plan, "the assistance of the individual citizen is indispensable."<sup>(60)</sup>

In the context of a localised dispute on the level of rent levied on council house tenants, Brier and Dowse (1966) have pointed to the educative advantages of becoming involved in an embroglio with the local council. The 'amateur activists', though in the initial stages possessing few of the necessary political skills with which to undertake their dispute with the council, came to realise the necessity of being well-informed (in quantity and quality), and of developing acute and potentially usable techniques of communication and persuasion in order to advance the cause with which they had identified themselves. A similar message may be drawn from the variety of citizen protests reported and analysed by Lipsky (1970), and the saga of the siting of the third London airport and the resistance organised by the villagers of Cublington (Perman, 1973). Without doubt, the

<sup>(60)</sup> van Cleef (1966), p. 165.

resistance associations developed considerable technical, organisational and political skills in their endeavours to defeat the proposal that would have effectively destroyed their village: "the people of Cublington became their own experts in matters of planning and aviation, and the campaign made full use of the talents of ordinary people."<sup>(61)</sup>

One of the distinctive characteristics of the Cublington issue was the ability of the resistance association to argue constructively and positively. The persuasiveness of the case might have achieved an identical result without the assistance of the many prestigious consultants engaged by the village, but that is conjectural and not now testable; but the achievements of the laymen strategists and planners is not contestable.

#### *The External Agencies*

In the previous summary treatment of the principal participant groups, reference was made to the two types of influence that the external group may bring to the decision-making process in urban and regional planning: procedural prescription, and political or administrative norm. In the discussion which follows, of these two influences, there will be concentration on the involvement of the central government departments concerned with planning in the United States and in Britain, and on the role played by the planning profession. It should not be interpreted that those are the only two areas of importance, nor that their significance is continuous, and all-pervading, and neither that their relative importance will maintain the present state of balance with the other component groups of external influences. The catalogue of such influences would encompass the many quasi-professional bodies to which reference was fleetingly made in the previous section; this inevitably means that the very important roles of bodies such as (in Britain) the National Trust, the Civic Trust, the Town and Country Planning Association, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, the Fabian Society,

<sup>(61)</sup> Perman (1973), p. 166.

and many other promotional or protectionist bodies<sup>(62)</sup> will have received inadequate treatment in this book. This unfortunate omission deserves redress, perhaps, in some other place.<sup>(63)</sup> To fairly describe the external group, mention should also be made of the bodies concerned with water, sewerage, electricity, gas supply services, which in some countries are statutory (e.g. in Britain) and in others are the province of free enterprise (e.g. in United States), and of the various types of transportation undertaking.

However, most of these bodies participate in a conventional and predictable manner. Much less predictable are the roles played by central government agencies and the professions, possibly because these two areas are particularly susceptible to the sometimes revolutionary changes induced by shifts in the attitudes and aspirations of the public; thus, the trend towards statutory recognition of citizen participation has largely been born as a response to sectionally-motivated popular pressure, and the built environment professions in general and urban and regional planning in particular, have adopted their present form and status largely as a result of the public's attitudes towards them.

*Planning, local government and the central ministries.* Hill (1974), in her consideration of the realities of democracy at the level of local government, has commented that the local councils are not the only governing bodies at that level, and, in spite of their constitutional right to govern, they exercise those powers of government as agents of central government or subject to legislature and to such other conditions as may from time to time be imposed from the 'higher' level. The organisation and administration of locally performed services are both subject either to national legislation or to derived guidelines, or both. Sharp (1969) has interpreted the same situation from the opposite viewpoint; she has observed that almost all of the policies emanating from the central ministry, in the areas of local government, housing and construction, planning and en-

<sup>(62)</sup> Some indication of the types of organisation potentially interested in and capable of meaningful participation may be gleaned from the list of bodies which made representations to the Skeffington Committee (Skeffington Report, app. 2).

<sup>(63)</sup> Useful material on the role and effectiveness of such bodies may lie 'hidden' in unpublished theses.

vironmental protection are to be put into effect by, and therefore to be interpreted by local authorities. There is, therefore, in the British planning system at least, a very close and determinable interdependent relationship between the Ministry and the local planning authorities. In describing the activities of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Sharp has remarked that "the Ministry is dominated by two partly conflicting considerations. One is its dependence on local authorities and its anxiety that authorities should push ahead with public health, housing, planning. The other is the quasi-judicial jurisdiction which, at a crucial stage in the procedures, must keep it at arm's length from the authorities, and as careful of the rights of the citizen as it is of the wishes of the authority."<sup>(64)</sup>

It would appear the largely discretionary and delegatory attitudes adopted by the British central ministry have been based on the premise that local authorities should be encouraged to use their own initiative, and to command the services for which it has a statutory responsibility in accordance with the peculiar requirements of each separate local government area. Thus, the role of the ministry has largely been one of exhorting local authorities to pursue particular policies or to adopt similar planning techniques or procedures, of approving/modifying/disapproving proposals submitted by these authorities, of altering/extending/withdrawing/or imposing the obligations derived from legislation: "its main responsibility is to see that the authorities keep within the law and do not overstretch either their own or the national economy, and that the objections of rate-payers or others to what an authority proposes are given a fair hearing."<sup>(65)</sup> Partly as a result of the incessant growth of complexity of the operations at all levels of government, a more interventionist tendency in the work at the local level by the ministry may be detected. For the conduct of urban and regional planning, the position of 'control' in the planning process is persistently unclear, despite the recommendations of the Planning Advisory Group (1965), and the recent enactments of 1968 to 1971. This state of uncertainty is an administrative manifestation of the intellectual, practical and philosophical upheaval being experienced by planning at the present

<sup>(64)</sup> Sharp (1969), p. 25.

<sup>(65)</sup> Sharp (1969), p. 26.

time as it moves, apparently reluctantly, from a land-based 'civic design' exercise to one which is more scientifically based and managerial in character. It is certain, that one of the more significant stimulants to the reorganisation of local government in Britain was the inadequacy of the prevailing planning system to cope with the current planning needs.

Sharp (1969) has identified the three main elements of routine planning casework as (a) direction of comprehensive planning policies; (b) adjudication of individual authorities' plan submissions; and (c) adjudication of the conflicting interests of authorities, aggrieved development applicants and the interests of the public at large. These are the three areas in which the central planning ministry is effective either directly or overtly, or indirectly and less conspicuously, as a participant in the planning process.

The formulation of planning policies is dependent more on political than technical objectives, and as a consequence, the process is particularly vulnerable to revolutionary change. For example, the cherished policies of low density housing, having become an extravagance because of unexpected levels of population growth and the extensive levels of car ownership, have become an embarrassment; the preference for finite size of towns within a prescriptive greenbelt has become too constraining and inflexible, and largely economically invalid. "For the technical planner ... life is peculiarly difficult ... At points he is almost indistinguishable from the administrator."<sup>(66)</sup> In so far as the room for manoeuvre in recommendation is hedged by ministerial circular, statutory instrument, handbook or manuals, or the specification for practice is dictated to some extent by statutory instruments and the design bulletins, the planning function can be described as an administrative one.<sup>(67)</sup>

Descriptions of the dictatorial aspects of the central ministries' functions (Sharp, 1972; Clare, 1972), no matter how guardedly they

<sup>(66)</sup> Sharp (1969), p. 175.

<sup>(67)</sup> For example, the wording of the Foreword to Planning Bulletin No. 1 (1962) *Town Centres: Approach to Renewal* is: "The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify the main issues involved, the primary objectives to aim at and the methods by which they can be achieved"; the introduction to *Development Plans: a Manual on form and content* (1970) comments that "it has been conceived as a reference document to guide".

are expressed, reveal the extent to which the conduct of the local planning authorities is prescribed. Cullingworth (1972) has observed, that it is the area of discretion which brings into close relationship the central ministry with the local planning authorities, while Mandelker (1962), commenting on urban growth and official policies of constraint, has remarked that the prevailing institutionalised framework of planning in Britain—with its statutes, quasi-judicial procedures, supervision from central government and implementation at the local level—is inclined to blur the distinction between policy-making and policy application, thereby enlarging the role of the administrator who has to determine a specific case. The potential control and implementation of standardised procedures of the central ministry is rendered possible by the discretion delegated to the local level and the narrow limits of action available to the courts; the gap between these two is filled by the authority and arbitration of the ministry responsible to central government. Despite the not infrequent tendency to tone down the precision, Cullingworth has conceded that the positive powers and functions of the British central ministry should not be minimised, powers which have a statutory basis, enabling any decision or policy of a local authority, in theory at least, to be over-ridden. In addition, in respect to the proliferation of circulars, handbooks, and bulletins, Cullingworth has commented that their effect is often more than guidance, particularly as they have usually been based on considerable research and offer substantial assistance to the often inadequate technical staffs of some planning authorities.

*Citizen participation and central government direction.* The prevailing legislation in Britain pertinent specifically to urban and regional planning lays the responsibility for 'maximum feasible participation' of the public with the plan-making agency or the local planning authorities. Speaking to the second reading of the Bill, later to be given statutory effect as the Town and Country Planning Act, 1968, the Minister said: "above all I am determined that there shall be more real public participation in planning... a good deal more than the right to inspect plans and object to them."<sup>(68)</sup> This determination

<sup>(68)</sup> Cited in Heap (1973).

is presently expressed in the sections 8(1) and 12(1) of the Act of 1971, although the resultant delays in the planning process has necessitated a curtailment to the earlier euphoric invitation to participate by the amending Act of 1972. It is necessary to be aware (Heap, 1973) that, according to the relevant statute, the need and requirement for citizen participation is mentioned only in part II of the 1971 Act, that is, that part referring only to the plan-making process; thus, so far as the law is concerned, there is no insistence that participation is extended to the routine casework of development control and the associated procedures of appeal. The crucial point seems to be that all local planning authorities entitled or enabled by the ministers to prepare the plans nominated by the 1971 legislation are required to indulge in citizen participation practices whether or not they are competent to do so; presumably, these authorities are required to recruit staff with a special competence in this area of work.<sup>(69)</sup> Reynolds (1969), in her overview of the public participation idea in its infancy in Britain, urged that the supporting ministerial regulations should be specific.

This undoubted need has not yet been met; perhaps some of the value of the project being co-ordinated by Hampton at the University of Sheffield will remedy this serious deficiency.

In a sequence of publications, from a variety of authors, the Council of Europe has generally pointed to the impossibility of defining one universally acceptable and applicable system for achieving meaningful citizen participation. Nygaard's (1972) study of fourteen European countries, Martini's (c. 1972) overview, and the comparative analysis of European practice undertaken by the research staff of IULA (1971), all report on the necessity for practice to be determined by subject matter, characteristics or type of planning, institutional structures and the procedures through which the various institutions (or participants) are required to co-operate. There seems to be little of relevance in most European planning systems to advance the practices of participation beyond the not uncommon statutory insistence that such activities take place.

<sup>(69)</sup> Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (1973), *Public Participation in the Regional Planning Process* vol. I, pp. 103-6 (Draft report). See also Fagence (1975).



There is an information vacuum separating the legislative requirements and the ministerial advice to local planning authorities; past the insistence that participation occurs to the satisfaction (ultimately) of the Minister, there are not even guidelines which merit investigation. For Britain, and most other European countries, therefore, there is a need of a manual on participation—a code of practice, a statement of minimum accepted standards. The history of participation practices in the United States is of such length, and the issues for which such activities have become a procedural norm are so many, that it is not unexpected that there is a prescription of activities; but this prescription has to be determined deductively from an interpretation of the specific information required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order for applicant authorities to be successful in their pursuit of federal funding for particular renewal projects from the Federal Housing Act of 1949 (as amended). Accompanying applications for federal financial assistance are to be submissions and statements which reveal the applicant authority's awareness of the many facets of the problem it seeks to eliminate; in addition the Workable Program for Community Improvement specifies action in four areas, one of which is the establishment of programmes designed to achieve the meaningful involvement of citizens, including poor and minority groups, in the planning and implementation of the HUD assisted programmes (Fagence, 1974).<sup>(70)</sup> It is appropriate at this point to briefly report the particular requirements of these programmes.

A guiding principle of HUD policy is to ensure that all citizens have an opportunity to participate in the definition of policies and programmes which affect their welfare. Therefore, the Workable Program requires clear evidence that the municipal authority has provided opportunities for citizens, including those who are poor and members of minority groups, to participate in all HUD assisted programmes for which a Workable Program is a requirement. The municipal authority is also expected to show what progress has been made during each certification period to achieve an adequate and effective

<sup>(70)</sup> This commentary on the U.S. Workable Program is a summary of Fagence (1974); it also draws on *Columbia Law Review* vol. 66, no. 3 (March) 1966, which devotes the entire issue to an examination of citizen participation and urban renewal.

degree of citizen involvement. While the Workable Program does not prescribe any specific form, process or structure for effecting citizen involvement, it does require that whatever mechanism is devised be continuous, i.e. participation at the stages of planning, monitoring, evaluating, and in all ways influencing the derivation of the programme. However, there are certain principles and objectives which are expected to underlie the authority's effort. One is that the authority's responsibility does not end with the establishment of a particular mechanism or set of mechanisms. The Workable Program requires continuing effort on the part of the municipal authority to improve and expand the opportunities for creative forms of participation and collaboration which both ensure representation by poor and minority groups as well as enable government to take effective, purposeful, and expert action to deal with the problems and needs facing the community. It is essential that the participation be satisfying, rewarding, and not frustrating if it is to achieve the basic objective of creating and sustaining a voluntary union and mutual trust between government and its citizens.

Each city is encouraged to establish a community-wide advisory committee embracing all major interests, to create several new special-purpose groups, or to make better utilisation of existing organisations. Cities which already have established effective citizen advisory committees for Workable Program purposes or for Model Cities programmes, are encouraged to retain them and improve their effectiveness. In addition to establishing appropriate organisational means for citizen involvement, each municipal authority is encouraged to:

- (a) develop specific functions for citizen committees, such as having them hold public hearings, prepare comments on Workable Program applications, evaluate project plans, conduct interviews and surveys of neighbourhood residents' views etc;
- (b) develop specific methods by which the community can establish a basis for ensuring there will be fair and reasonable representativeness of advisory committees participating in the Workable Program. For example, one method by which to compose a community-wide advisory committee might be to choose representatives in equal proportions, from private neighbourhood groups,

government programme-connected advisory groups, and civic groups.

- (c) establish a planning group to help develop new ideas and techniques for generating greater involvement among poor and disadvantaged groups;
- (d) provide funds and technical assistance to neighbourhood and other advisory groups so they may become better informed and equipped to deal with complex redevelopment problems;
- (e) assign specific activities in HUD-assisted projects to designated neighbourhood groups, such as evaluating site and design considerations, establishing information centres, and making recommendations with respect to housing project regulations.

Each submission of a Workable Program is considered by an appropriate Regional and Area Office of HUD, similar in status and responsibility to the regional offices of DOE in Britain. In an attempt to achieve reasonable standards of consistency in evaluation, both through time and geographically, HUD has produced a manual of instructions and guidance. The document (HUD, 1971) is intended to establish the responsibilities of the Area officer, and to nominate appropriate processing procedures by indicating specific evaluation criteria. The Program submission is expected to include a description of the arrangements on working relationships to provide citizen groups with opportunities for access to the decision-making process, and a description of the nature and range of issues with which the participating groups and individuals dealt. In addition, the city is expected to make an assessment of the results and accomplishments of the citizen involvement strategy.

In determining the meaningfulness and effectiveness of citizen involvement, the Area Office is required to devise performance standards and conduct an examination of a city's Workable Program submission based upon those standards. Such an investigation might include interviews with affected parties. Every effort is required to be made to corroborate the statements of the city embodied in the Program submission. The evaluation process includes an assessment of nine stated elements of participation (HUD, 1971) (Table 5.4). The guidance set out in the HUD manual is required by virtue of

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TABLE 5.4. Evaluation Criteria for Citizen Involvement Programmes

A. Participants:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. nature, number, type of participating groups;</li> <li>2. role of the 'poor' and 'minority' groups;</li> <li>3. effectiveness of the advisory groups;</li> <li>4. responsiveness of public officials to the participating groups;</li> </ol>
B. Process:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. nature of the participation programme—number and type of involvement activity;</li> <li>6. appropriateness and opportunity for exchange of information, views, comments on drafts, etc;</li> <li>7. accessibility to public officials by participating groups and individuals;</li> </ol>
C. Procedure:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. steps taken to encourage citizen involvement;</li> <li>9. provision of technical and/or financial assistance to participating groups to facilitate meaningful contribution to the plan-making process.</li> </ol>

Source: based on HUD Handbook. 1400.2 (1971) pp. 33-4.

TABLE 5.5. Citizen Involvement Statement

1. (a) Identify the groups participating in the HUD-assisted programs related to the Workable Program and in the community's program to expand the supply of low- and moderate-income housing.
- (b) Describe the type of groups (e.g. civic, neighbourhood, housing) that are participating, and the constituency represented (e.g. poor, middle-class, Negro, public housing residents).
- (c) Describe what particular HUD-assisted programs and projects such groups are participating in.
- (d) Describe efforts to achieve co-ordination among citizen participation structures located in the same area or having similar program interests.
2. Describe the arrangements or working relationships set up to provide group and individual opportunities for access to and participation in decision-making in the applicable HUD-assisted programs.
3. Describe the steps which have been taken in regard to the applicable programs to provide participating groups and individuals sufficient information and technical assistance.
4. Describe the nature and range of issues relating to the applicable programs with which participating groups and individuals have dealt; the recommendations subsequently made; and the specific results and accomplishments of the participation.

Source: HUD-1081 (11-68) pp. 18-20 (verbatim).

the significant shift from the previous federal policy on urban renewal, to a policy requiring each city to develop its own plan of action and development programme; the federal control is exercised by the application of consistent evaluation criteria. Cities are required to submit their 'Application for Workable Program Certification or Re-Certification' on an approved form, a twenty-page document sub-divided according to the four activity-areas mentioned previously, viz. codes and code enforcement, planning and programming, housing and relocation, and citizen involvement. The specific information requirement for the statement on citizen involvement is set out in Table 5.5.

This 'carrot and stick' formula for citizen involvement strategies, whilst being a creation of the peculiar governmental system of the United States, has strengths which should facilitate its incorporation into most other planning systems without too much trauma. Almost certainly, without such specific requirements as those set out in Table 5.5, and the knowledge of the evaluation procedures set out in Table 5.4 it is unlikely that any 'higher level' instruction to prosecute participation practices at the local level will be implemented in a meaningful way in the face of the traditional conservatism and élitism of the previously conceived conventional decision-makers, the elected representatives and their officials.

*The influence of the professional institutes.* Cherry's (1974) recent documentation of the history of town planning in Britain is prefaced by a comment from the incumbent President of the Royal Town Planning Institute which succinctly sets the context for the influence of the professional institute: "For all its stumbling uncertainties the profession of town planning has survived and evolved during the past sixty years, despite much professional jealousy and political reservation. Its evolution has spawned in Britain a thorough planning system. ..."<sup>(71)</sup> The basis of the 'control' exercised by the professional body on its members is a culmination of events which crystallised in 1914 with the founding of the British Planning Institute, an event which itself was the creation of the interaction of the promotional bodies which preceded it, such as the Garden City movement, the

<sup>(71)</sup> Cherry (1974): quotation by Ashworth, p. ix.

1909 Act, the emergence and partial development of a separately identifiable body of knowledge and practice, and the commencement of planning education in the University sector.

The traditions of the architectural, engineering and surveying professions, their insistence on codes of conduct, standards of practice, standards of educational attainment, and charges for professional work set the guidelines for the gradual growth of the distinct town planning profession. From Cherry's record of the struggling emergence of the British Institute it must become clear that, having survived the tribulations extending over a prolonged period the Institute would be in a position to exercise reasonable authority over its membership. This authority, not always accepted without serious question, is the basis of the control which constrains the behaviour of professionally-recognised members in every aspect of planning work, including the professional-client relationship and the interaction of planners with the public. The professional body has made conspicuous efforts to adjust to the changes in attitudes about authority, the nature and role of government, the respective values of the individual, and the responsible public authorities, and the dilemma of conflict between the aspirations of a pluralist society and a governmental decision-making system dependent on the formation of consensus. A series of Presidential addresses since 1960 have pointed to the principal dilemma confronting the Institute: "to uphold, on the one hand, progressive and austere professional educational and creative standards in the field of our endeavour and, on the other hand, to so widen our membership, that we do quite genuinely constitute a more comprehensive professional forum on town planning, which will be respected, much more than it now is, by government, by people at large and by other professional bodies".<sup>(72)</sup>

Levin (1968), in his review of the evidence submitted to the Skeffington Committee by the Royal Institute of British Architects and the (then) Town Planning Institute, reported doubts on the intentions of these two Institutes towards citizen participation; he remarked "neither institute admits the possibility of the public getting any closer to planning decisions than the far end of a communications link of the 'explain and ascertain' variety", and he was particularly

<sup>(72)</sup> Lane (1964), *J.T.P.I.* vol. 50, no. 10.

incensed by "the crudity of the way in which communication is regarded."<sup>(73)</sup> The memorandum of evidence submitted by the Town Planning Institute to the Skeffington Committee<sup>(74)</sup> is prefaced by the comment that the practice of its professional members has inevitably developed an acute awareness of the issues concerned in the democratic decision-making process, with experience from the viewpoints of the local planning authorities and consultancies to both public agencies and private persons and organisations. This preamble affords evidence of the claims of inherent charisma and competence denigrated by Davies (1972) and others. The Institute's attitude towards citizen participation has remained conservative and paternalistic; its advocacy of means, both for the short and the long term, suggests that the planning profession as presently constituted may be inadequate for the task, particularly as its reference to the prevailing shortages of fully-qualified and professionally accredited staff is indicative of an entrenched attitude. These comments would have been expected of an Institute representing a less radical profession than town planning; the Institute's main concerns in its evidence to the Committee seem to have been to protect the prevailing status of its members and to insist on the maintenance of the conventional means of democratic decision-making at the local level. For example, its concluding paragraph makes reference to the availability of supplementary evidence "of those methods of achieving public enlightenment and participation of which some of its more eminent members have gained experience." Following the publication of the Skeffington Committee's report, the Institute's 'official' observations betrayed a similar degree of reluctant sympathy to the issue, commenting upon the possible commitment of effort to the practices of citizen participation without an obvious equivalent recoupment in an improved decision process.<sup>(75)</sup>

The recent debate in the British planning institute has again raised

<sup>(73)</sup> Levin (1968), p. 495.

<sup>(74)</sup> Reprinted in full, *J.T.P.I.* vol. 54, no. 7 (July/August) 1968, pp. 343-4.

<sup>(75)</sup> The observations are reprinted in full, *J.T.P.I.* vol. 56, no. 2 (February) 1970, pp. 50-1. Of particular relevance to the point being made are the comments on the inevitability of participation practices being introduced without a preparatory validation study, and on the doubtful balance sheet of advantage to the commitment of the resources of time, energy and money.

the matter of whether the institute wished to operate as, and be considered by all, both inside and out, as a learned society, or profession or a trade union. This issue is confused by the spectrum of specialisms now considered relevant and contributory to the planning process. With these matters continually exercising the executive and the membership of the Institute, it should be of little surprise that, despite the wideranging procedural controls which the professional body is capable of exercising, there are sectors within the membership ranks which are both ideologically and temperamentally disposed towards a commitment to public involvement in plan-making. It is from this nucleus that some proponents of advocacy for disadvantaged groups in society are drawn.

A relaxation in the Institute's élitist, paternalistic, conservative image may be detected in its attitude towards the possible creation of a system of planning aid (see later). The 'blue paper' which accompanies the regular editions of the Institute's journal has recently revealed an intention to extend the professional 'outreach' activities.<sup>(76)</sup> There are indications, therefore, that there is developing a conscious tendency towards a closer identification of the principal tenets of the planning profession with the emerging and articulated needs of the client public, a tendency which still retains the hold of the professional body over its membership. The contortions experienced by the British Institute have been repeated, with variations, in the United States' Institute (Webber, 1963).

The problems which have, and which continue to beset the planning profession are not wholly peculiar to that profession; in his examination of the future of the planning profession, McLoughlin (1973) has observed that the tribulations are repeated in different forms and to different degrees in most of the other recognised professions, because they have become a common feature of twentieth century life. His conclusion to the dilemma of the future, is for the professional body to withdraw from its instrumental role—the 'job ticket'—and to tend towards a fundamental role as an intellectual and spiritual home. No matter which role is eventually the dominant, the impact of the professional institute on the conduct of its membership will remain significant.

<sup>(76)</sup> *R.T.P.I. News*, p. 9-16, (*Journal R.T.P.I.* vol. 60, no. 10 (December) 1974).



*The Consultants*

The discussions concerning this group of participants is frequently emotional, particularly because of the bland assumption that the only inept experts requiring expert assistance are the poor, the minority ethnic groups, the non-whites, the socially and psychologically disturbed and deprived. A distinct contribution to this dilemma has been the profusion of theoretical and case studies, principally concerned with matters of urban renewal, and almost solely restricted to the United States' context, from such political commentators as Davidoff 1962, 1965), Peattie (1968, 1970) and, more recently, Blair (1971, 1973). It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish and then to consider separately, the two dimensions of this problem, and to examine the contribution of these participant roles.

Briefly, the consultants may operate in either of two spheres; the first is concerned with the furnishing of specialist advice to public authorities, to industrial/commercial concerns, to recognised and quasi-institutional interest groups, and to private persons, in exchange for a fee and a commitment to accept and act upon the advice. This situation is neither more nor less than the conventional professional-client relationship, with which is associated traditions and norms of behaviour, of ethics, and of payment for services rendered. Possibly because it is seldom emotionally charged, and is of scarce media value, this consultants' role is often ignored. However, its significance is rendered noteworthy if the client's struggle is newsworthy (e.g. the resistance of the villagers of Cublington and the proposed location of the third London Airport (Perman, 1973)).

In a review of the 'advocacy' phenomenon<sup>(77)</sup> the consultants' role in the conventional sense has been interpreted as establishment advocacy, and the consultants described as 'establishment advocates'.<sup>(78)</sup> This interpretation is an accurate reflection of the consultant's role,

<sup>(77)</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, September 1968, 'Advocacy Planning: What it is. How it works', pp. 102-115.

<sup>(78)</sup> It is perhaps not wholly accurate for the term 'establishment advocate' to be used for consultants *per se*; but the inference is accurate. In the *Progressive Architecture* report (see footnote 77), the expression is used specifically for those zealous planners and architects which choose to use their talents 'where the action is' for the benefit of a wider client-public, than to restrict themselves to campaigning for a particular interest or small geographically identified group.

either in the capacity of specialist advisor, or as an eminent professional identified with a particular cause, or planning philosophy (e.g. Buchanan, and environmentalism), and whose charismatic weight would profit whichever side of a dispute he chose to support. It is reported that the Urban Design Group within the New York City Planning Department considers itself to be of the advocate variety, seeking goals and powers which are different to those pursued by the more restricted client groups, and acting as advocate for the entire city.

*Advocacy planning.* For descriptions of the more generally accepted conception of consultancy in advocacy capacities, it is usual to resort to the work of Davidoff, Peattie and Blair. The advocacy movement has emerged since about 1964, and is characterised by its population of students and young practitioners, and dissident practitioners. The common sympathies of the advocates are the concern with the shape of architectural and planning education, the politics of the left, the deprivations suffered by the urban poor and minority ethnic and national groups, the lot of the American negro, and the citizen's groups experiencing establishment pressures for renewal or redevelopment. In practice, these similarities are translated into different objectives, work with different client groups, into different plan types/solutions to problems, and into ruptures from conventional professional practice for different reasons. The essential distinction between the traditional planner and the advocate planner is that the latter chooses to act on behalf of new type of client—'the constituency' of disadvantaged groups. In the American situation generally, and in a recent example in Australia (see later), advocate planners may set up offices in or near the urban ghettos or redevelopment-prone districts and work directly with and for the identified client group drawing on government grants or aid, or they may work from University centres upon which they depend for funds and professional personnel.

Without doubt, the concept of advocacy planning, as so many other concepts in urban and regional planning and in community development, has been derived from contemporary American situations. The frequently stated goal of the advocate planners is "to

raise the power of the poor and the underprivileged minorities through professional, technical and government aid",<sup>(79)</sup> but there have been doubts expressed that the process is little more than an exercise undertaken by planners with a particular ideology which masquerades as participation but which is tantamount to manipulation (Blair, 1973; McConaghy, 1972; Keys and Teitcher, 1970). The genesis of the movement was given early recognition by Davidoff (1965), and its relationship to legal practice clearly differentiated: "The legal advocate must plead for his own and his client's sense of legal propriety or justice. The planner as advocate would plead for his own and his client's view of the good society. The advocate planner would be ... a provider of information, an analyst of current trends, a simulator of future conditions, and a detailer of means ... a proponent of specific substantive solutions."<sup>(80)</sup> It is seen as part of the advocate planner's responsibility to 'educate' his constituency in the arts and crafts of planning, including a statement of their rights under planning and renewal laws, in the procedures and institutions of government, to help the client group to clarify its ideas and to give expression to them (Davidoff, 1965; Peattie, 1968).

Despite the conscious attempts to generate interest and commitment to responsible and expert action at the grass roots level by residents, the advocate planners have not always succeeded in overcoming some of the more serious impediments to their objectives, and it is often the weaknesses in the system of advocacy that are exploited by the adversaries and ignored emotionally by the advocates and their clients to their eventual detriment. For example, Peattie has reported the early problems of attracting funds to support the operations of Urban Planning Aid in Cambridge (Mass.) which forced the operations of the advocacy group to volunteer levels of professional involvement;<sup>(81)</sup> there are problems of satisfactorily identifying the real client group, and after having achieved that much, of being able to effectively communicate with it;<sup>(82)</sup> a further problem is that of adequate representation, both of all shades of opinion to

<sup>(79)</sup> Blair (1973), p. 143.

<sup>(80)</sup> Davidoff (1965), p. 333.

<sup>(81)</sup> Peattie (1968), p. 82.

<sup>(82)</sup> Uhlig (1965), cited in Peattie (1968), p. 82.

the advocates (a communications problem) and of the extent to which Pitkin's symbolic form is manifest in the articulant group.<sup>(83)</sup> Another important difficulty experienced by the advocate planner is that of reconciling conflicting interests within his client group and the creation of an amicable consensus,<sup>(84)</sup> of which one important dimension is the almost impossibility of recruiting support from what Peattie has described as the bottom of the social structure.

To overcome some of these difficulties the advocate planner may come down from the mountain and seek for himself sources of funding, a representative group from among his constituency, and a technique to draw out the hidden reserves of talent from the 'inactives'. Peattie has urged caution in this overt campaign to elicit support, particularly as it could rupture the delicate balance that needs to be struck between the political and the technical dimensions of the planning matter at each stage of the process, and as it might unconsciously alienate support or sympathy from just those members of the constituency it is most difficult to draw into the decision-making system. It is naive for the advocacy planners to assume that their role is even principally that of providing technical advice, and for such planners to assume that their actions are above suspicion.<sup>(85)</sup>

In these circumstances of such obvious difficulty, many of the difficulties compounding others, it is surprising that the concept of advocacy planning persists, and that advocacy planners are still a force to be reckoned with. Marris and Rein (1967) have argued that the type of planning generally considered to fall within the description of advocacy planning should be carried out by planners who are disinterested analysts, reconciliatory by temperament, flexible in approach and aware of the needs of the entire community rather than a single sector of it. Their view is that a planner should be a technical advisor concentrating on means rather than ends. If the

<sup>(83)</sup> Peattie (1968), p. 83.

<sup>(84)</sup> Peattie (1968), and Gans (1965), amongst others, have reported this almost intractable problem.

<sup>(85)</sup> Blair (1973) has posed the question whether advocacy planners are simply manipulators of another kind. Peattie (1968) has disclosed a situation in which the advocacy group with which she was concerned were required to leave a meeting with the representatives of other groups, all being classified as 'outsiders' (p. 85). There is a dichotomy here.

politicking *could* be left to the client groups, this would be a comfortable role for the planner to fill; however, most evidence from most case studies records a poor competence level in the majority of members of the advocates' constituency. Therefore, to adequately discharge his professional role—to his satisfaction at least—the advocate planner assumes both the political and the technical responsibilities. Pahl's (1969) division of the planning profession highlights the dilemma facing the aspiring advocate planner: apart from the conservative element desirous of maintaining the traditional styles of decision-making in planning, the action-oriented elements are divided into those *progressives* anxious to develop a planning means capable of revolutionising the prevailing social order, and the *unadoptives* who are anxious to bring about change, but who are uncertain whether the most suitable means would be within or outside the established planning agencies. The dilemma is perhaps further confounded by "the advocacy road (is) becoming crowded with students fresh from planning school",<sup>(86)</sup> and the dubious, and perhaps irresponsible, development of what has been referred to as "clinical advocacy".<sup>(87)</sup> In addition, perhaps because of a number of contributory factors including the ease with which it is possible to respond negatively or antipathetically to the propositions of an establishment planning agency, there is a perceptible tendency for the advocates to be characterised by youth, ideological fervour (i.e. the moral crusade referred to previously), and political and planning inexperience. The experience deficit may be quickly redeemed by practice, but there is an inevitable cost to be borne by someone, and that is usually the client group whose cause may not always achieve its due reward because of inexpert advice and counsel. Keyes and Teitcher (1970) have remarked upon this deficiency, suggesting the advocate planner "lacks the skills necessary to put together bricks and mortar",<sup>(88)</sup> relying more on the tools of dramatic confrontation than those of calm resolution of differences by negotiation.

<sup>(86)</sup> Keyes and Teitcher (1970), p. 225.

<sup>(87)</sup> Mazziotti (1972), has detected a proliferation of papers written as a result of the action of university-based advocacy planning groups, and work conducted in the context of vacation or in-course internships with planning agencies or groups. Mention was made of this trend in the education in British planning schools.

<sup>(88)</sup> Keyes and Teitcher (1970), p. 225.

Another, and quite different point is raised by Keyes and Teitcher; despite their lack of many of the necessary political and planning skills, the establishment is inevitably impoverished if the talented graduate planners choose to work with consultants or to act for disadvantaged groups in advocacy capacities rather than gravitate towards the public planning agencies, whose resort to the engagement of less imaginative, uncommitted and politically insensitive staff can only contribute to the entrenchment of attitudes in the agencies and to the cause of further frustration in the disadvantaged and minority groups. The thesis of Keyes and Teitcher, in summary, is that advocacy planners need to work *within* the conventional planning agencies to achieve maximum advantage, and that those who choose to operate selectively, i.e. for particular interests or groups, their attitude should be one of empathy with city hall rather than sympathy or hostility.

The diminution of the euphoria to which advocacy planning was subjected in the mid-1960's has been expressed by Peattie (1970) in her declaration that the goal of serving identifiable 'communities' is as elusive as the planning agencies' claims to serving the general 'public interest', but in contrast, she has asserted that advocate planners should seek to support those clients whose issues are capable of significantly contributing to the development of a political and planning process generally capable of bringing about meaningful social change to the benefit of the disadvantaged sections of the community, even if resort is necessary to "variously staged dramatic performances."<sup>(89)</sup> However, even ingenious measures to achieve genuine social improvements might fail to bring the greatest advantage to the least advantaged sections of the community. McConaghy (1972), for example, has expressed the sentiment that "public participation, as such, is bound to exacerbate the disadvantages of the disadvantaged ... (and the) professional excursions into the area of the poor will remain more or less dilettante".<sup>(90)</sup> The catalogue of deficiencies inherent in the advocacy system, as he sees it, prejudices Mc-

<sup>(89)</sup> Peattie (1970), p. 405.

<sup>(90)</sup> McConaghy (1972), p. 98. McConaghy's paper offers a sobering experience for anyone unthinkingly or emotionally committed to the concept of advocacy planning.

Conaghy's optimism for the fruits of advocacy labours; he suggests that, from his experience, advocacy practice has been "one of heroic attempts to treat local sores without administering any systemic medicine. To a degree, advocates are part of both the system and the institutions which they seek to change. This gives rise to anomalies of a political, administrative, and technical nature that impose limitations on professional concern, which in an ideal situation should be limitless....

...I conclude that the real limitations of advocacy planning in deprived areas are technical, administrative, and political. Technical, because we use artefacts, statutory measures, and arbitrary standards of doubtful relevance to problems of social mobility. Administrative, because advocates can rarely relate to any bureaucracy relevant to the special needs of areas of multiple deprivation. Political, because we have demonstrated an unawareness of the seriousness of the problem and a total lack of will to resolve it."<sup>(91)</sup>

*The academic fraternity, and advocacy.* In the examinations of the duties, responsibilities and remuneration of academics, conducted in many countries of the world at various times, there have frequently been considerable references to the opportunities afforded for 'engaging in outside activities'. The final authority for the concession to engage in such work has been almost unilaterally delegated to the academic institutions; some institutions have imposed quite positive limits to such activity where it attracts remuneration, but generally there appears not to be a similar constraint on the unremunerated activities usually associated with advocacy. Robertson (1964) conducted a pilot investigation into the extent to which senior academics found themselves "by virtue of (their) office and standing in the community drawn into public work";<sup>(92)</sup> he considered that the importance of such public duties should not be minimised, and that the extent to which the community draws upon the services of the universities should be recognised.

A recent report from the National Science Foundation<sup>(93)</sup> documented examples of the use of university resources to help with the

<sup>(91)</sup> McConaghy (1972), p. 97, p. 100.

<sup>(92)</sup> Robertson (1964), p. 291.

<sup>(93)</sup> National Science Foundation (1972).

identification and solution of local government problems. Mixed teams of academics and students were engaged with governmental personnel on mutually agreed projects covering such matters as traffic management, rural land use zoning and planning. The project was designed to make the education courses more relevant to the needs of the community, and to make available to local government expertise and resources available at the University but not usually readily available to municipal governments. These exercises in consultancy afford one aspect of the advocacy phenomenon. The other is typified by the involvement of academics overtly and directly in the prosecution of the conventional advocacy activities on behalf of disadvantaged community groups, such as the support of the Venice Community Design Center in Santa Monica by the UCLA Department of Urban Affairs,<sup>(94)</sup> the Pico-Union Neighbourhood Council in Los Angeles, the Lozells Social Development Centre in Birmingham, and many other similar ventures, some of which are enduring, others of which emerged with a particularly contentious issue but which became redundant when the peak of enthusiasm had passed.

Two of the benefits of an identification of planning schools with advocacy-style activities are the introduction of the politically naïve students (and sometimes their mentors too) to the vagaries of political education by experience 'in the field', and the rendering of reasonable planning expertise to groups or localities which would otherwise have to function without the necessary minimum skills. A recent example of this type of activity has been conducted in Queensland; a group of three academic staff and fourteen students became the planning team for a community lacking initiative in the desperate fight to prevent the apparently inevitable demise of a small town consequent upon the cessation of mining activities. The community lacked enterprise, any idea of how to positively consolidate the town, and permanent officials committed to the maintenance of a socially and economically viable community; such expertise as was available to and in the council seemed incapable of capturing the fervour necessary to even objectively consider the alternative options available for the future of the community. Into this vacuum, the University group

<sup>(94)</sup> This Center closed when the U.C.L.A. funding ceased in June 1973.



injected its own enthusiasm, an identifiable degree of necessary skill, and galvanised the local community leaders into an awareness of the rudiments of planning philosophy and planning design in order that, once the University exercise had been completed the local leadership might be better able to implement its planning preferences. This exercise is not exceptional in the emergence of 'clinical advocacy': many planning schools condone or even encourage such activity, either as part of the curriculum or as vacation experience. The benefits for the participants are twofold; firstly, the natural and often radical enthusiasm of the student fraternity is harnessed for productive community enterprise, and secondly, the academic staff are afforded the opportunity to indulge their ideological fervour, to usefully apply their professional talents, to progressively train their charges, and to substantially repay the community for its investment in their own professional training.

Lorch (1954) has commented on the need to thoroughly sensitise students and teachers of planning in the practicalities of local politics; Robertson (1964) has reported on the public duties of academics; Davidoff (1965) has argued that in the broadened, more client-responsive milieu of planning the appropriate education needs to be better co-ordinated, integrated and to be more comprehensive and penetrating. These attitudes, and many which are similar, tend to locate the responsibility for the adequate preparation of embryo-planners in the academic institutions, and by specification to the academics. Presumably the most adequate training is obtained from a judicious balance of theory and practice. If Broady's (1964) supposition that extensive higher education presages a growth in voluntary initiative is valid, then his concluding remarks (that such initiative, expressed in group form, will need to be professionally-competent) may be interpreted as extending the advocacy phenomenon from the disadvantaged of low socio-economic status to the temporarily disadvantaged of higher status, introducing the status of 'disadvantage' as the common denominator for advocacy rather than a particular socio-economic connotation. In such situations, the allegedly middle-class attitudes with lower-class sympathies of academics and student groups, should accommodate an enlivened commitment to advocacy style activities.

*Summary*

The purpose of this protracted and discursive description of the principal participant groups potentially active in the decision-making processes in planning has been to reveal at least some of the variables which render the whole philosophy of citizen participation almost incapable of reasonable translation into practice. The weight of consideration of the groups has been distributed very nearly equitably, yet the suspicion lingers that, despite brave attempts to the contrary, the procedures to be followed and the composition of the principal groups remain essentially conducive to decision-making by manipulation and by the élite.

In his foreword to Hampton's consideration of local government in Sheffield, Crick has observed that local government in Britain is inadequately primed on the precise preferences of the constituents: the electoral process is not an adequate means of ascertaining the aspirations and preferences of the citizenry. Hampton's (1970) research has disclosed that councillors receive a distorted impression of constituent priorities and feelings generally; yet, the forum of the elected members is inclined to act on the distorted images rather than to make strenuous efforts to ascertain precisely the feelings of the community. As a contribution to this picture of distortion, the lay public is persistently and therefore predictably backward at coming forward with meaningful and usable expressions of its attitudes, and as a result it is the easily identifiable groups of joiners that manage to promote a cause or an issue to which there might be as much objection as support. Such distortions are magnified by the constraints and opportunities handed down from a superior level of government, delegated responsibilities which are the subject of not inconsiderable statutory circumscription. In addition, the final arbitration of disputes<sup>(95)</sup> rests, for urban and regional planning in the recommendation of an 'anonymous' ministry inspector or higher civil servant; but, even that objectivity may be subjected to political pressure exercised through the party political procedures or the system of patronage in which political debts need to be discharged. Thus, the potentially democratic decision-making process in plan-

<sup>(95)</sup> i.e. before resort to the judicial processes.

ning, through a system of elected and therefore accountable offices, is capable of easy translation into an overtly administrative process susceptible to manipulation by means of various forms of political élitism.

The other participants—the planners, the public and the consultants—are by no means a match for the control emanating from the government. Rabinovitz's (1968) mobiliser planner is a rare species; and perhaps he should be, for no matter how well intentioned ideologically such a planner is, being human, he has self-developed prejudices and an incomplete inventory of the full spectrum of planning skills, and he is therefore incapable of discharging his role in a wholly detached and objective fashion. No matter how inept the elected representatives, it might be the most suitable democratic condition if the planner in public office functioned in a role not much in excess of the broker. This capability of technical élitism in public agencies may be extended to the consultants; the advocacy planners are not so unprejudiced as they would wish believed. It is probably impossible for such planners to be dispassionately objective and critical in all of their dealings; the mere fact of working for a client group of less than the total community introduces the likelihood of partisanship. There is virtually no possibility that the public, however this group is defined, can act other than in a self-oriented and preferential manner, with subjectivity repeatedly outscoring objectivity.

Bolan (1971), in his formulation of "a general sketch ... to suggest the range of variables influencing social relations in any planning setting"<sup>(96)</sup> has drawn attention to the interpersonal relationships and the person—context relationships implicit in decision-making situations in urban and regional planning. To conclude this chapter on participants it is useful to set the various roles, and behaviours in those roles into the decision-making environment; it is precisely this that Bolan has achieved.

In his consideration of the social relations of the planner, and particularly the units, rules, system and environment of the planning network. Bolan correctly distinguishes that the planner *always* is serv-

<sup>(96)</sup> Bolan (1971), p. 386.

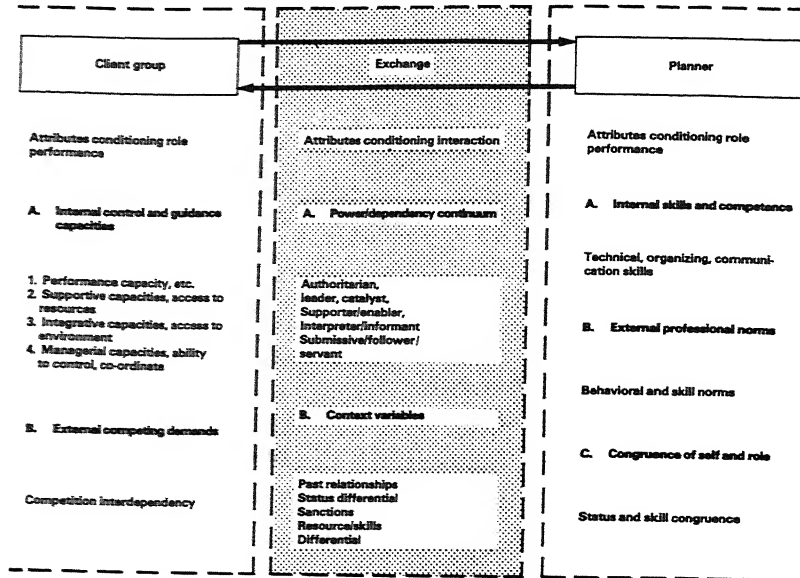


Fig. 5.3. Factors influencing the interaction of the planner and the client (based on Bolan (1971), fig. 2, p. 388).

ing a specific client group, whether that group is the government, the elected representatives, interest groups, institutions, or the planners themselves. Thus, it is possible, sensible and realistic to identify the participant groups in some way, as has been done in this chapter and Chapter 4. In modifying Bolan's thesis slightly, but not jeopardising its coherence, it may be suggested that there are identifiable factors influencing the interaction of the participants in the planning process (Fig. 5.3); these factors may be separated into two distinct categories, referring to those which 'condition' the participant role performance, and those which 'condition' the interaction between the participant groups. Briefly, these may be listed as (a) conditioning role performance—technical, organisational skills; innovatoriness; communication and political skills; access to support resources; interdependencies of and competitions between issues and roles; and the language of personal characteristics with role expectations; and (b) conditioning the interaction between roles—the location of the

'action' on the power or dependency continuum, and the differential context variables. Of particular relevance to the expectations of participation practices is the concept of the power-dependency continuum, discussed in the introduction to this book. To briefly restate the concept, the nature of the power relationship is fundamental; it may be construed as a reciprocal relationship in which the power of one person or group derives from the dependency of another (Emerson, 1962; Bell *et al.*, 1969).

Bolan has further identified the exchange relationship factors influencing the interaction of any participant group with the community decision network (Fig. 5.4). It is this relationship which significantly determines the potential or the actual achievement of the practices of citizen participation. As in the previous examination, the factors may be differentiated into those which condition the role performance, and those which condition the interaction between the participants. The usefulness of Bolan's conceptual frameworks lies

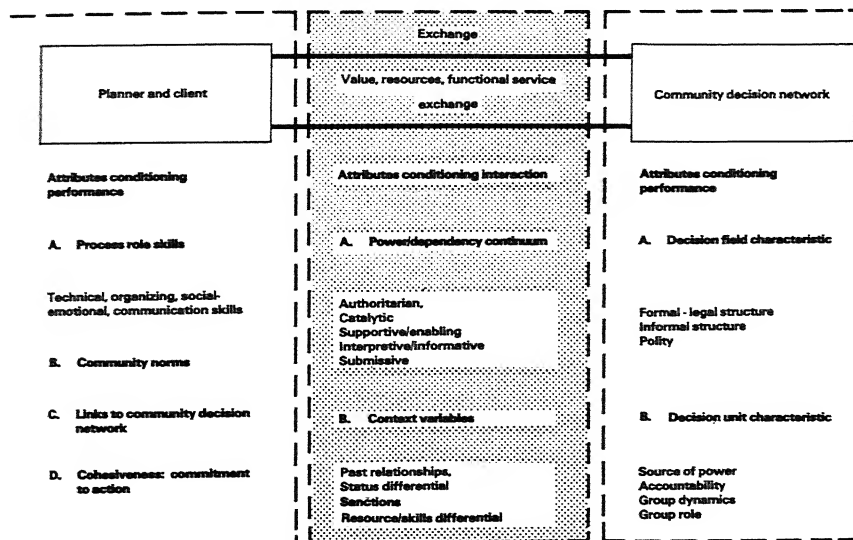


Fig. 5.4. Factors influencing the interaction of the client and the community discussion network (based on Bolan (1981), fig. 3, p. 391).

in the revelation of the situational variables dictating decision-making performance; hence, the "criteria for selection of planning method becomes somewhat less influenced by (his) traditional utopian instincts or pedantic tendencies, and more concerned with the relationship of planning method to the processes of social interaction in decision-making".<sup>(97)</sup> Until recently, and perhaps still, the selection of a method for a particular planning activity has been in accord with simplistic assumptions about pluralist decision-making systems, and with others about the participants, their competence, interest and status. However, with the prevailing trend favouring increased levels of popular involvement, it is necessary to be aware that "to prepare a plan is to promote a cause. This is never a purely technical task... It is a social process and necessarily entails social relations."<sup>(98)</sup>

It is to the matter of the means by which those social relations may be meaningfully expressed and manifest in the preparation of a plan, or in more general decision-making in urban and regional planning, that attention is now directed in Part 3.

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<sup>(97)</sup> Bolan (1971), p. 394.

<sup>(98)</sup> Bolan (1971), p. 395.

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## PART THREE

### *The Means of Participation*

From the considerations of Part 1 it emerged that the cornerstone of democracy is possibly the participatory decision-making process involving both the government and a suitable representation of the public. This situation is almost universally accepted; "the idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you."<sup>(1)</sup>

However, beyond such general statements of acceptance, there is an extensive base of hesitancy, confusion, resistance to experimentation, and a general unwillingness of groups to indulge in co-operative action. This atmosphere of confusion is compounded by the differential success of the wide variety of participatory models which are in use. Burke (1968), in one of the most frequently cited contributions to the literature on citizen participation in urban and regional planning, has suggested that there is no one participation strategy which is suitable for every possible participatory situation. He has suggested that it is more appropriate to conceive of several strategies, each determined by specific and peculiar objectives. The means used to achieve desired ends are almost inevitably constrained by the availability of necessary resources, and by organizational norms. As Burke has observed, planning has become institutionalised, operating through formal organisations. This fact alone, largely prescribes the means which may be used to achieve meaningful citizen involvement; "... the relevancy of a strategy depends both upon an organization's abilities to fulfill the requirements necessary for the strategy's effectiveness, and upon the adaptability of the strategy to an organisational environment."<sup>(2)</sup> To a large extent, the basis from which more extensive participation has to be developed is very conservative.

<sup>(1)</sup> Arnstein (1969), p. 216.

<sup>(2)</sup> Burke (1968), p. 288.

The means which may be developed to bring about citizen participation have been variously described. For example, Hyman (1969) has differentiated between a power élite and a pluralist model; Burke (1968) has identified five strategies described as education-therapy, behavioural change, staff supplement, co-optation, community power; Fagence (1973) has described four approaches to participation as abbreviated, cautious, ebullient and structured; in a more practical frame of reference France (1971) has constructed three models—conflict, cop-out, and coalition. No matter how the classification is approached, in the development of the models or strategies there would seem to be three almost invariable criteria (Burke (1969)); these are, that:

1. the essence of democratic representation (i.e. by elected members) is not prejudiced;
2. the frequently unheard expressions of some private interests are given due weight;
3. the strategy or means to be used should be enduring.

In a comment on the presumed intention of delegates to a national conference on citizen participation it was asserted that a magical solution to solve all the problems of participation was not possible, but there were techniques available, or that could be envisaged with which the planners could become better listeners, and with which the citizens could become more effective articulators of their causes and preferences.<sup>(3)</sup>

The intention of Part 3 is to examine some of the more, and some of the less conventional techniques of participation which may be used in urban and regional planning. In Chapter 6 there is a review of the participation practices or opportunities available in the British planning system both before and after the publication of the Skeffington Report. This review is undertaken to set the subsequent examination in perspective; a degree of citizen participation was an integral part of the planning system in Britain before the publication of the Skeffington Report. Chapter 7 is substantially concerned with an examination of a comprehensive, but by no means exhaustive list

<sup>(3)</sup> National Conference on Innovative Strategies for Effective Citizen Participation (University of Wisconsin, Madison; March, 1972).

of possible participation techniques. The consideration is confined to the generic forms rather than the variations which may be developed to cope with peculiar circumstances; where appropriate, reference is made to examples of the techniques in use. In the face of even this range of techniques it is appropriate to be reminded that "the real key to effective citizen participation is the willingness on the part of both technicians and policy-makers to really have citizens participating ... the techniques without this willingness can become merely subterfuge."<sup>(4)</sup>

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<sup>(4)</sup> Avent (1972), p. 18.

## CHAPTER 6

### Participation Opportunities— the Case of Britain, before and after 'Skeffington'

The history of participation in planning by laymen is remarkably short, but it should not be considered necessarily a product of the worldwide eruption of the clamour for a general participation in decision-making which was the hallmark of the 1960's. Citizen participation in planning matured during that decade, but, at least in so far as Britain is concerned, the bases upon which more overt public involvement could develop had been a distinctive component of the planning process and the planning ethic for almost the preceding twenty years. Although the attitudes towards citizen participation throughout the 1940's and 1950's were essentially conservative, the legislative framework within which British planning was conducted incorporated at particular points in the process opportunities for some types of participation.

The situation of British society in general was conducive to the review of the opportunities for public involvement which occurred in the middle years of the decade of the 1960's, culminating in the publication of the Skeffington Report (1969). The British record is treated briefly in this chapter.

It has seemed all too common in the conduct of urban and regional planning that the professional planners have had to perform an undoubted useful social service in a vacuum created by "indifference, neglect and apathy on the part of politicians and public alike",<sup>(1)</sup> and without useful or usable support from the resources of social science. This has virtually forced the planner, sometimes reluctantly,

<sup>(1)</sup> Sutherland (1966), p. 539.

to base his predictions and projections on assumptions of his own choosing. In conducting the affairs of planning in this information and feedback vacuum, it was probably inevitable that the pendulum of public interest and concern would swing to the opposite direction bringing into effect a multitude of criticisms, and exposures of unfortunate planning decisions. In the present British context of a statutory requirement for the indulgence in exercises of citizen participation, it is possible that the vacuum situation will not recur. However, it may be argued that, notwithstanding the increased levels of sophistication it is possible to bring to bear on strategies of citizen involvement, the planning system prevailing in Britain in the pre-1968 situation afforded ample, reasonable, meaningful and usable opportunities for whichever members of the public wished and sought to become involved in the decision-making process, whether as individuals or aggregated into identifiable groups. Yet, as Sutherland (1966) has observed, there were, in that early period, significant variations in the degree to which lay participation could take place, particularly because of the differential interpretation by local planning authorities of their functions and the need to consult their citizens: "the degree of participation by the public will depend on the rights of the individual under the law, the interest of the people in their surroundings, the willingness of the planning authorities to inform the public and to encourage them to participate, and the enthusiasm of the planners, the politicians and the public for planning in a democratic manner."<sup>(2)</sup> Heap (1948), commenting upon the epoch-making 1947 Act, asserted that the plan most likely to be acceptable to the public would be that which "in effect, they make themselves."<sup>(3)</sup> The commitment to lay participation in plan-making was incorporated in the early planning statutes, in spirit if not by the letter; certainly the requirements placed upon the local planning authorities to substantiate their planning cases (through public inquiries), to publicise specific planning matters and make available for public scrutiny planning registers and approved plans, afforded significant participatory opportunities—but of a particularly passive kind.

<sup>(2)</sup> Sutherland (1966), p. 540.

<sup>(3)</sup> Heap (1948), p. 26.

The principal causes of complaint about the decision-making process in planning, which contribute to the unfortunate image of the planners communicated by the media,<sup>(4)</sup> have been the approval for major development without prior exposure of the proposals for public comment, the denial of a traditional property right in the interests of an anonymous public, the reluctance to reveal the magnitude or implications of proposals, the anonymity of the final decision-making caucus, and the duration between submission of an application and the receipt of any decision. Most of these criticisms point to the use of the comprehensive, élitist master plan approach to decision-making, in which the process proceeds along a path dictated by the expert with perhaps a preconceived plan in mind, in ignorance (consciously or innocently contrived) of the aspirations or preferences of the client public.<sup>(5)</sup> To properly evaluate these criticisms, it is necessary to briefly review the opportunities for citizen participation given statutory effect, either as a requirement or as a discretion of local planning authorities in the planning system previous to 1968.

PARTICIPATION AND PLANNING:  
1947-1968

In the decision-making process commonly pursued by local planning authorities in the period 1947 to 1968, the principal points of contact for the public with that process were:

- (a) the public notice columns of the local press in which were publicised certain 'bad neighbour' (article 7, G.D.O. 1959) planning activities or applications (see s.15, 1962 Act); s.17, 1962 Act gave the right to the public to submit written representations on the matter to the local planning authority before a decision was reached;
- (b) the mass publicity programmes, accompanying any type of planning issue, largely by means of media reports, information bro-

<sup>(4)</sup> "You probably do not need me to tell you that John Citizen hates and distrusts planners and we have about as good a press as burglars" Littlewood, S. (1957), *John Citizen and the Planners*, *J. Town Planning Institute* vol. 43, no. 7 (June), p. 158.

<sup>(5)</sup> This point is made forcibly by Chapman (1948).



- chures, or static exhibitions mounted by the local planning authority; these were essentially discretionary;
- (c) the register of all applications for planning permission and of the decisions made in respect of those; s.19 (4) (5) and G.D.O. 1950 article 12 required the register to be kept and to be open for public inspection;
  - (d) the public notice columns of the local press, and the *London Gazette*, in which the local planning authority was required to publicise the submission of a development plan to the Minister, or of a review or of a partial amendment (TCP (Development Plans) Regulations, 1948, Schedule II, and part III of 1962 Act); in the public announcement, a period was specified within which any person could lodge an objection to the plan in writing with the Minister;
  - (e) the public inquiry system, held either in connection with the submission and consideration procedures for development plans or in connection with appeals to the Minister against a planning decision; the rules of procedure for these and similar inquiries (TCP Appeals (Inquiries Procedure) Rules, 1962), referring particularly to appeals under s.23 and s.24 of the 1962 Act, accommodated the submission of representations on the planning matter by the affected and other interested people, and conferred an entitlement as of right to certain categories of people to appear at the inquiry, although the presiding inspector was empowered to use his discretion to allow any other person or representative to participate (Rule 5(2)); in addition to the principal participants, the inquiries were usually expected to be conducted before a public audience;
  - (f) the deposited and published agenda and minutes of planning committees and councils.

Although some acts of citizen participation were required by Statute, or were derived from planning legislation through a series of statutory instruments, and despite the specification of certain actions to be undertaken by the local planning authorities, much of the interpretation of the regulations was left to local discretion. Haar (1961), in his consideration of planning legislation some ten years after the

enactment of the 1947 legislation, remarks on the negation of the democratic process perceptible in the procedures for the preparation of the development plan. He observed that, while interest groups potentially affected by the plan in the course of preparation would usually be consulted in the preliminary stages, the consultation was not obligatory; it was at the discretion of the local planning authority. His second observation was that the provisions for the plan-making exercise lacked the specification of direct public involvement, even of those whose land was likely to be affected by decisions crystallised in the plan. Haar referred to the citizen consultation provisions of the 1954 Housing Act in the United States, and recommended that thought be given to incorporating similar features in the British planning legislation.

Even before the wave of enthusiasm for an extension of the decision-making process in planning to accommodate a greater lay input, some local planning authorities were indulging in participatory means which afforded meaningful opportunities for public involvement. In an editorial to the British Planning Institute's journal<sup>(6)</sup> reference was made to the lack of conspicuous success in mobilising public interest and participation at the local level, despite the democratic setting of British planning. Jackson (1964) developed this theme in his examination of the need to bridge the gap between the planners and the planned by education. He cited Buchanan's reference<sup>(7)</sup> to the lesser planning powers available in the United States for which there is compensation in the readiness of community groups and individuals to co-operate with the planning agencies. However, some local planning authorities in Britain had significantly democratised their decision-making process to afford substantial opportunities for public involvement, although the differences in the degree and type of involvement entertained were marked. For example,<sup>(8)</sup> there were reports that the liberalising means which were implemented, or with which experiments were made, included (a) the encouragement of collaboration between planners and local residents in the production

<sup>(6)</sup> *J. Town Planning Institute*, vol. 50, no. 6 (June 1954), p. 221.

<sup>(7)</sup> *Traffic in Towns*, London, H.M.S.O. (1963), para. 440.

<sup>(8)</sup> 'Drawing Citizens Into Planning', *Town and Country Planning*, November 1964, pp. 441-44.

of village plans, (b) the extensive use of media reportage of events, proposals, meetings, and publications, (c) the selective use of public hearings and ward meetings, (d) the promotion of lecture or discussion series with particularly interested and responsible local groups or associations, (e) the use of static exhibitions and advertisement hoardings, and (f) the solicitation of public expressions in responses to questionnaire surveys. In a more innovative fashion, some local planning authorities were experimenting with 'ideas competitions', the use of professional public relations consultants as a catalyst, and joint lay-expert committees as 'sounding-boards' for planning ideas.

The evidence of the participation strategies embarked upon before the introduction of the statutory obligation, reveals both a degree of commitment to the philosophy of lay participation, and a willingness on the part of some authorities to seek more constructive and 'interest-capturing' means of involvement. There is a suspicion, however, that the political seriousness of the concept, when operationalised, has been misjudged; from the dearth of reports of the situation prior to 1968, it is clear that most local planning authorities were of the opinion that 'participation' meant 'being informed', and as a consequence, they directed their resources into public relations exercises intent on disseminating information in order to achieve a better appreciation in the public of the planning proposals.<sup>(9)</sup>

#### *The Planning Advisory Group Report*

It was partly to achieve an improvement to the democratic quality of the development plan system that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government set up the Planning Advisory Group in May 1964. The Group cited amongst its main objectives "to ensure that the planning system serves its purpose satisfactorily both as an instrument of planning policy and *as a means of public participation in the planning process... to get the level of responsibility right...*"<sup>(10)</sup>

<sup>(9)</sup> "There is a distinction between public relations, which often means putting the best possible face on something already approved, and obtaining public interest and involvement in planning work". See footnote (8); p. 442.

<sup>(10)</sup> PAG (1965), p. 2. para. 1.1.

In proposing what amounted to a two-tier plan system, the Group considered this advocacy of striking the appropriate balance between the responsibilities of central government and those at the local level. The advocated system, for the local level, was expected to "stimulate a more positive and creative approach to environmental planning ... a greater sense of local responsibility and greater scope for public participation in the planning process ... (and to) mean that the individual is better informed and more consulted on planning matters."<sup>(11)</sup> In making its proposals the Group was aware that the implications of their implementation would require local planning authorities to be more positive in their approach to plan-making, and that to meet this 'new' commitment, the authorities would need to attract more and better trained planning staff and "to carry the public with them."<sup>(12)</sup> It was considered necessary to mention that the informatory responsibilities in the proposed development plan system should extend beyond an explanation of the planning proposals, to an explanation of the processes involved from the means of plan generation to the rights of objection or comment; the costs involved in undertaking such widely-embracing activities were considered to be justifiable, and legitimate. The need to court popular support was a recurring theme in the Report, and it was re-emphasised by the Minister's Chief Planner: "the importance of public understanding and confidence in establishing the status of local plans is critical and cannot be overstressed" (James, 1965). Cullingworth (1972) has offered a more definitive observation: "It is clear that citizen participation is more than a desirable adjunct to the new system—it is an essential feature. If citizen participation fails, so will the system".<sup>(13)</sup>

#### PARTICIPATION AND PLANNING: SINCE 1968

The recommendations of PAG were substantially translated into the Town and Country Planning Act, 1968. As far as its advocacy of citizen participation is concerned, the White Paper preceding the

<sup>(11)</sup> PAG (1965), p. 11, paras. 1.46, 1.47.

<sup>(12)</sup> PAG (1965), p. 12, para. 1.49.

<sup>(13)</sup> Cullingworth (1972), p. 103.

Act called for public discussion of the relevant planning matters while they were at the formative stage, and could accommodate the influences and input of ideas from the affected citizenry. While the 1968 Act was being prepared, the Minister of Housing and Local Government set up the Skeffington Committee "to consider and report on the best methods, including publicity, of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their area".<sup>(14)</sup>

The deliberations of the Committee, which included the consideration of more than four hundred submissions of evidence or comment, and the benefit of discussions with selected bodies on draft memoranda, were published in the form of a descriptive report with a schedule of recommendations in July 1969. In summary, and in sequence, the recommendations were that,

- (1) the public should be given information;
- (2) the public should be advised of the availability of information;
- (3) public comment and representations should be accepted into the planning process continuously;
- (4) the local planning authorities should convene community forums;
- (5) the efforts of publicity should be directed widely;
- (6) community development officers should be appointed to secure the involvement of the traditional non-joiners;
- (7) participants should be informed of the use made of their representations;
- (8) participation should have a diversity of expressions; and
- (9) a general effort should be made to educate the public about planning matters and procedures.

Many commentators have observed that the recommendations are scarcely innovative, that they largely express conventional democratic processes and formalities, and that they conspicuously avoid the crucial and contentious matters of means, costs, time delay, competence of the public to participate, and so on. Its lack of precision, particularly in the definition of terms has perpetuated some of the dilemmas of participation. Allison (1975) has attributed the trite assessment,

<sup>(14)</sup> Skeffington Report (1969), para. 1.

'trendy but toothless', in his commentary on the Report; however, he has remarked on three impediments to the extension of participation, both in terms of its duration and the scope of the people to be involved, commenting that participation may only be increased from a very low level to a slightly higher level, not only because of the complex and enduring nature of the planning process, but also because it is unlikely that the prevailing planning system could take the strain, not the least because of the inherent lack of information (see Chapter 8).

The major contributions and shortcomings of the Report have been widely discussed. One of the essential dilemmas or frustrations which it is necessary to overcome if participation, whether in the form described by Skeffington or in any other suitable form is to be realistic and realisable, is the inherent reluctance of local authorities to engage in widespread debate with the citizenry. The Report recognised this difficulty,<sup>(15)</sup> and it has exercised the political perceptions of many commentators (e.g. Hill, 1970, 1974; Cullingworth, 1973; Levin and Donnison, 1969). Hill (1974) has observed that "local planning authorities, while reluctant to accept direct participation in the making of plans, have always recognized the *need* to consult interested parties."<sup>(16)</sup> This conservative tendency has effectively neutralised two of the more interesting, even innovative, recommendations of the Skeffington Committee. In considering the differential degree of participation to be expected from "the active minority who take part in influencing community affairs" and "the passive, who although deeply affected by decisions, do not make their voices heard because of diffidence, apathy or ignorance of what is going on",<sup>(17)</sup> the committee separately considered participatory techniques appropriate to the 'actives' and to the 'passives'. For the 'actives', essentially conceived as organisations, the Report recommended the creation of a community forum, to promote useful and usable discussion between the local authorities and the identifiable groups.<sup>(18)</sup> Although the idea is given considerable space in the Report, in its conclusion

<sup>(15)</sup> Skeffington Report (1969), pp. 3-5, 9-11.

<sup>(16)</sup> Hill (1974), p. 143. (my italics).

<sup>(17)</sup> Skeffington Report (1969), para. 59.

<sup>(18)</sup> Skeffington Report (1969), paras. 60-71.

to the description, the Committee advises that no particular rigid form for the forum had been developed, but that it would be expected a suitable form might emerge in any situation to accommodate the information and discussion requirements of local authorities and local groups. For the 'passives', the Report recommended the engagement of a community development officer to act as a catalyst for expressions of local opinion.<sup>(19)</sup> A precise statement of the work of the community development officer was avoided, deliberately, but some indication may be gleaned from the suggestion that his work might entail personal contact with groups and with individuals "to give information, to receive and transmit reactions, and to be a link with existing groups or to promote new local ones."<sup>(20)</sup>

The Report comments upon the resistance expressed to both of these recommendations during the consultations conducted by the Committee. Hill (1974) has commented on this matter that the local authorities' preference is for more informal methods of consultation; Cullingworth (1973) has remarked upon the implications the recommendations hold for the transfer of power from the councils to groups of electors; Allison (1975) has cited a particular Ministry circular in which it is stated that neither community forums nor the appointment of community development officers would be necessary solely for the purpose of development plans.<sup>(21)</sup>

Senior (1973), commenting upon the possible extension of the ideas of the Skeffington Report into statutory effect suggested that the only obligations likely to be placed upon local planning authorities could be (a) giving adequate publicity to the preparation of the plan and to the collection of information; (b) making those who might be expected to make representations about the plan aware of their rights and opportunities; (c) considering the representations made before finalising the plans and (d) informing the Minister what steps had been taken to secure participation. It would be unlikely, he suggested, that the impending legislation could specify who was to be considered a participant, or how they might become involved, or

<sup>(19)</sup> Skeffington Report (1969), paras. 80-90.

<sup>(20)</sup> Skeffington Report (1969), para. 84.

<sup>(21)</sup> Allison (1975), cited p. 104. These sentiments are repeated in Ministry Circular 52/72.

how their representations should be handled. The various submissions of evidence to the Committee, and the observations on the Report by the professional bodies and associated societies commented upon these matters to diverse degrees<sup>(22)</sup> (Levin, 1968).

The Town and Country Planning Act, 1971, sections 8 and 12, embodies the spirit of the Skeffington recommendations, requiring local planning authorities to take steps "as will in their opinion" secure adequate publicity and ensure that people "who may be expected to want an opportunity to make representations" are made aware of their rights and are given adequate opportunities to make representations.<sup>(23)</sup> The Minister has reserved the right (sections 8(4)

<sup>(22)</sup> For example, see *J. Town Planning Institute*, vol. 54, no. 7, pp. 343-44, and vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 50-1; *Town and Country Planning*, July-August 1968, pp. 330-39.

<sup>(23)</sup> Section 8, *Town and Country Planning Act, 1971, part II*. "8.—(1) When preparing a structure plan for their area and before finally determining its content for submission to the Secretary of State, the local planning authority shall take such steps as will in their opinion secure—(a) that adequate publicity is given in their area to the report of the survey under section 6 of this Act and to the matters which they propose to include in the plan; (b) that persons who may be expected to desire an opportunity of making representations to the authority with respect to those matters are made aware that they are entitled to an opportunity of doing so; and (c) that such persons are given an adequate opportunity of making such representations; and the authority shall consider any representations made to them within the prescribed period.

(3) A structure plan submitted by the local planning authority to the Secretary of State for his approval shall be accompanied by a statement containing such particulars, if any, as may be prescribed—(a) of the steps which the authority have taken to comply with subsection (1) of this section; and (b) of the authority's consultations with, and consideration of the views of, other persons with respect to those matters.

(4) If after considering the statement submitted with, and the matters included in, the structure plan and any other information provided by the local planning authority, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the purposes of paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of this section have been adequately achieved by the steps taken by the authority in compliance with that subsection, he shall proceed to consider whether to approve the structure plan; and if he is not so satisfied, he shall return the plan to the authority and direct them—(a) to take such further action as he may specify in order better to achieve those purposes; and (b) after doing so, to resubmit the plan with such modifications, if any, as they then consider appropriate and, if so required by the direction, to do so within a specified period."

Section 12, *Town and Country Planning Act, 1971, part II*. "12.—(1) A local planning authority who propose to prepare a local plan shall take such steps as will in their opinion secure—(a) that adequate publicity is given in their area to any relevant matter arising out of a survey of the area carried out by them under section 6 of this Act and to the matters proposed to be included in the



and 12(4)) to require further publicity and public involvement in respect of plans submitted to him before he would be willing to consider them. This system is similar, but very inferior to, the requirements of the United States Workable Program (see pages 229–33).

Heap (1973) has drawn attention to the fact that, as far as there is a statutory obligation upon local planning authorities to undertake citizen participation programmes, the only requirement is set out in part II of the 1971 Act, and applies only to the making and bringing into operation of development plans. Thus, in law, there is no requirement for the participation practices to operate in matters of development control. Bingham (1973) has considered the different problems for citizen participation which are created by the two areas of planning activity, forward planning and development control, and has concluded that to be effective from the points of view of *all* the participants to the decision-making process, the participation activities need to be carefully controlled, with rights of representation

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plan: (b) that persons who may be expected to desire an opportunity of making representations to the authority with respect to those matters are made aware that they are entitled to an opportunity of doing so; and (c) that such persons are given an adequate opportunity of making such representations; and the authority shall consider any representations made to them within the prescribed period.

(3) A copy of a local plan sent to the Secretary of State under subsection (2) of this section shall be accompanied by a statement containing such particulars, if any, as may be prescribed—(a) of the steps which the authority have taken to comply with subsection (1) of this section; and (b) of the authority's consultations with, and their consideration of the views of, other persons.

(4) If, on considering the statement submitted with, and the matters included in, the local plan and any other information provided by the local planning authority, the Secretary of State is not satisfied that the purposes of paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of this section have been adequately achieved by the steps taken by the authority in compliance with that subsection, he may, within twenty-one days of the receipt of the statement, direct the authority not to take any further steps for the adoption of the plan without taking such further action as he may specify in order better to achieve those purposes and satisfying him that they have done so.

(5) A local planning authority who are given directions by the Secretary of State under subsection (4) of this section shall—(a) forthwith withdraw the copies of the local plan made available for inspection as required by subsection (2) of this section; and (b) notify any person by whom objections to the local plan have been made to the authority that the Secretary of State has given such directions as aforesaid."

(Note: s.9 of the 1972 Act has restricted the range of persons to be heard at a public inquiry. See footnote (17) Chapter 7.)

being extended equitably, and with participation being possible throughout the decision-making system.

Inevitably, as most commentators have noted, with the wave of enthusiasm for citizen participation still breaking over the exercise of planning, and the preference of the elected representatives to make their own decisions, and with the planners being generally diffident if not ambivalent towards public involvement, the ability to rationalise on the whole matter is severely prejudiced; and this situation obtains despite the infiltration of the participation ethic into planning legislation.

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## CHAPTER 7

### The Means of Participation

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and examine techniques and procedures from the fields of public relations, group relations and decision-making which might realistically be used in order to bring the participants and participant groups considered in the previous Chapters 4 and 5 into a meaningful co-operative relationship. The diversity of planning situations, and particularly the differences in the components of those situations, renders unlikely a single, universally suitable technique or means being available.

In essence, citizen participation programmes are best founded on the development of suitable means to facilitate the communication and exchange of ideas, opinions and attitudes, and the evolution of a consensus, a policy or plan in a situation of mutual trust between the participants. A staff discussion paper on techniques for citizen participation has commented that "citizen participation is dependent on good planning".<sup>(1)</sup> However, too frequently it is the manifestation of a lesser degree of accomplishment which generates the demand for citizen participation in the various aspects of planning. "Citizen participation has been the victim of too little time, too little money, too little understanding, and too little patience."<sup>(2)</sup> Certainly, the nature of the conventional decision-making processes in local government, the predispositions of most of the participants or participant groups, and the nature of much planning work tends to frustrate the development of decision-making programmes which can accommodate a meaningful degree of co-operative participation from a variety of sources, whether or not those sources may be easily identified. The degree of attainable citizen participation is largely determined

<sup>(1)</sup> Detroit City Plan Commission discussion paper. Detroit (1968), p. 21.

<sup>(2)</sup> North Eastern Illinois Planning Commission report, N.I.P.C. (1973), p. 2.

by the citizenship skills of the aspiring participants and the receptiveness of the government body to an extension of the democratic ethic beyond the confines of the council chamber; "good citizenship fosters good government, and good government fosters good citizenship"<sup>(3)</sup>—or is this naive idealism? To continue the idealistic theme, if it is to be satisfactorily representative, citizen participation programmes *should* involve every person in the community; but, apart from the logistical problems in this notion in planning matters at any scale above that of the street or precinct, the possession of the necessary negotiating and subject-specific skills is enjoyed by only a small proportion of the population, and then, as Fromm has suggested, a significant proportion of the population is psychologically incapable of using the freedom to act in whichever participation programmes are made available.

✱ Arnstein (1969), in the provocative paper which has become one of the standard references on citizen participation, has drawn a framework which identifies the implications of the extent to which the pendulum of power in decision-making swings towards the traditional locations or towards those which, in the prevailing governmental context of western democracy, are little less than revolutionary. Her serious omission, however, is an indication of which means of participation are appropriate. Most commentators on the decision-making processes in government are able to point to inadequacies of opportunity for public involvement, but few have been able to be constructively critical, i.e. able to suggest means or techniques which would make available to the final political decision-makers expressions of opinion, attitude or proposition from the involved citizenry which would be usable. In lecturing overseas planners at a British conference, Ginsburg (1973) reiterated the need to understand what is meant by 'participation'; he nominated and distinguished between four "sets of relationships"—publicity, public relations, protest, participation. Speaking at the same conference a social historian suggested that, before the introduction of the modern public inquiry, there were three inter-related means by which the aggrieved could seek to influence government; by petition, by agi-

<sup>(3)</sup> Detroit (1968), p. 16.

tation, or by riot (Perkin, 1973). These three means are symptomatic of the simplistic interpretation of involvement. No less a simple approach is advanced in many of the official documents commenting upon the intentions of government to indulge in practices of citizen participation. For example, in a discussion report on the implications of the introduction of a comprehensive and standard citizen participation component to the conventional decision-making process, the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority of Perth, Western Australia, remarked that "it will be necessary at first to proceed modestly using those techniques which make the lightest call on present manpower and budgets".<sup>(4)</sup>

Such an attitude, by no means peculiar to Australia, renders the conduct of citizen participation of differential significance, between those planning agencies and authorities whose commitment to the principle is sincere, and those for whom such a commitment would be inconvenient and distracting from the conventional decision-making processes. From a different viewpoint, such an attitude reflects the possible division of the techniques of participation into those which are essentially of an information dissemination or reception variety, and those which are capable of contributing significantly to the input of factors necessary for a comprehensive and consensual decision to emerge.

Almost inevitably, a review of possible means would take the form of a catalogue. In order to achieve some coherence to the examination which follows, the means which are described are distinguished by:

- (a) the numbers of people likely to be, or capable of being, involved;
- (b) the degree of political and planning awareness required of the participants;
- (c) the capability of the conventional decision-making processes to accommodate the participant contribution;
- (d) the attitude (i.e. positive or negative) of the participant group to the planning situation.

This 'sifting' process has resulted in a typology which has élitist over-

<sup>(4)</sup> MRPA (1973), p. 8.

tones, and which has produced a classification which, at its most simple level, is based on value-judgements.<sup>(5)</sup> There is need for greater research in this matter to devise a typology, and to provide a menu of participation means, which is less subjective. However, in order to provide a framework within which to set the inventory of means discussed in this chapter, a simple fourfold division has been used; the four divisions are:

- (1) means which generally have a low level of impact on the decisions subsequently taken—i.e. they are public relations or information-gathering exercises;
- (2) means which are capable of sustaining a high level of impact on the decision-making process—i.e. they may be plan or policy generating exercises;
- (3) means which are of the 'self-help' variety, either from a protectionist or an advocacy viewpoint;
- (4) means which are associated with, and dependent upon, improved communication technology.

Techniques which may be placed into one or more of these divisions are considered in the remainder of this chapter, with each form of participatory activity being discussed in respect of its main features, its purpose and scope, its main expressions, its most likely participants, and its influence on decision-making and plan-making situations.

#### 1. CONVENTIONAL MEANS

The means which are most commonly adopted in programmes of citizen participation are those which occur to the mind most readily, are least costly, are least demanding on the time and the decision-making responsibilities of the local politicians and their professional staff, and are most conventional and therefore expected by the public. Such means include static displays and exhibitions, public meetings, the dissemination of information through leaflets and brochures, the collection of information through questionnaire surveys,

<sup>(5)</sup>Godschalk (1971) has devised a three-fold classification—"one-way input", "one-way output", "two-way interactive".

and information centres. These means, and others like them or derived from them, are essentially exercises in public relations and publicity; they are of scarce positive use to the ongoing planning decision process because, despite the opportunities which arise, or which are 'staged' to facilitate face-to-face contact between the local planning authority and its client public, the means of participation employed caters essentially for the flow of information from the planners to the public. This comment does not minimise the significance of the information flow process, because it is realised that little intelligent input can be expected from citizens if they are not kept informed of the data base from which the ongoing work of the planners and the issues which exercise the elected members are derived (Held, 1972). However, the existence of even the most simple means of participation is insufficient to ensure that a meaningful response will be made. For example, it has been reported that despite a saturation of a community with programmes of exhibitions and public meetings, and wide coverage of the events by means of posters and local press statements and advertisements only one-third of the respondents to a survey had any real appreciation of the planning situation or issues in the study area (Stringer and Taylor, 1974).

(a) *Exhibitions*

The Skeffington Committee recorded its partiality to the use of exhibitions to facilitate communication between planners and the planned.

It was suggested by the Committee that the imaginative use of a variety of audio-visual aids would add a dynamic quality to the usually conservative planning documentation. The exhibition technique is adopted by most local planning authorities as a means of communicating its proposals simply and graphically. Despite the high cost of mounting a well-produced exhibition, both in terms of money and man-hours, the value afforded as a communication and publicity device are often considered to be sufficient justification. The maxims for display materials are that they should be simple and easy to understand, yet be of a suitable level of detail to enable the viewer to form his own judgements; thus, there should not be a prerequisite



of familiarity with planning concepts and language in order for the display to be communicative. Experience is suggesting that the displays should be animated in some way, and that opportunities should be presented whereby the visitors to the exhibition may record their constructive comments or may discuss them with attendant competent staff.

The location of the exhibition has a significant impact upon its communicability, particularly as it is unlikely that many of the public would make a special journey to view it. Therefore, two solutions seem apposite; either a location at an important pedestrian node, as in a shopping plaza or at a transport terminal or interchange, or in a sequence of locations using a mobile exhibition vehicle. Coventry's use of a mobile single-deck bus successfully overcame the twin obstacles of attracting interest from a widely dispersed population, and of physically transporting the display materials from one location to another. In the Coventry case the bus was gutted and redesigned internally to accommodate display panels and circulation space in an informal environment. The experience produced contrary advantages and disadvantages (Coventry, 1973);<sup>(6)</sup> other cities have experimented with variations on the bus theme, some using adapted railway carriages (NIPC, 1973).

The medium of the exhibition may be considered to be a too obvious public relations exercise; alternatively, it may be considered as a sinister means of information manipulation, i.e. either with some critical information withheld or relegated to the 'small print', or with undesirable aspects of the plan graphically formalised and simplified to obviate penetrating questions. In addition, it has been asserted that the medium is communicative only to those viewers who are familiar with the presentation styles of the professional bureaucracy (Hoinville and Jowell, 1972). Almost inevitably, the more sophisticated the presentation replete with advanced communications gadgetry, the more likely is it that psychological problems will beset those sections of the community unused to the experience of such flamboyance or the surfeit of information it is required to assimilate and digest. Because of this possibility, the exhortation of the Skeffing-

<sup>(6)</sup> Coventry (1973) has provided a digest of useful 'low key' participation techniques, with comments on their operationalisation in Coventry.

ton Committee to engage specialist display designers<sup>(7)</sup> may be misplaced; the communication skills appropriate to the advertising media and the shop window are not necessarily so relevant to the more spacious exhibition hall, particularly when the purpose is not so much to sell the 'product' but to encourage an extended dialogue between the parties to plan-making.

(b) *Public Meetings, Hearings*

Of all the means experimented with, the holding of public meetings or hearings is as traditional as the mounting of exhibitions. The Skeffington Committee recommended that such events should be conducted on neutral ground rather than in City Hall, that they might best be conceived at the district level, that they should be preceded by considerable publicity, and that they should form but one element in an inventory of means used to communicate with the public. Public meetings usually take one of two forms; either they are truly 'public' in that an open invitation is extended to all citizens to attend an exposure of the planning authority's intentions and their submission to public scrutiny and comment, or they take the form of meetings closed to the public and open only to the membership of identified interest and professional bodies.

Stringer and Taylor (1974) have remarked that the public meeting is particularly susceptible to domination by the articulate, the vociferous, and the well-organised and prepared individuals or groups. Despite the description 'public', the meetings seldom are capable of achieving a meaningful public consensus because of the unrepresentative nature of those attending. However, the public event may be an efficient communication device if (a) the use of planning jargon is intentionally suppressed, and if (b) the opportunities afforded for public comment and questioning are seized. In any event, the spectacle of the planners being subjected to penetrating examinations is often adequate recompense to those who attend the meetings but who have no intention of actively participating. It is the possibility of witnessing a confrontation between opposed factions that is the

<sup>(7)</sup> Skeffington (1969), para. 160.

educational experience enjoyed by many that attend such public meetings. If there is a democratic qualitative benefit to be derived from the holding of public meetings, there must be some doubt on the quantitative justification for the expenditure of scarce resources on events which attract such a poor attendance response. Stringer and Ewans (1974), in their examination of a number of structure planning exercises, have revealed that the record of attendance varied between 0.04 and 3.4 per cent of the potential audience. For this reason, if for no other, it would seem inadvisable for a local authority to assume that the holding of public meetings would be a sufficient sortie into the inventory of participation means; the case histories of participation practices tend to emphasize the need for a programme of various means, of which the public meeting is only one. From the planning authority's viewpoint it needs to be recognised that the public meeting is not a very suitable means for achieving a meaningful feedback from the participating public; rather is it a means for disseminating information, for exposing local politicians and planners to their client public, and for airing sectionalised opinions. If it is proposed that their use be more constructive, their organisation needs to be more innovative.

There is an emerging consensus that to be useful, public meetings should be restricted in size, localised, and should concentrate on the consideration of issues which are fairly simple (Detroit, 1968; Gostwick, 1969). The matter of representativeness of the attendance at meetings is a further critical factor, and it should certainly influence the subsequent use of any comments passed at the meetings; apart from the usual socio-economic imbalance amongst those attending the meetings, it has been observed that geographical representation is similarly out of balance (GLC, undated). Arnstein (1969) has alleged that the public meeting fails as a communication device because it functions as a one-way information flow, *from* the planning agency *to* the client public, with little opportunity for feedback which can be usefully translated into the plan-making process; her criticism is that the uni-directional operation of the conventional public meeting is manipulative, accommodating superficial or evasive treatment of lay attempts at involvement. These sentiments are significantly shared by Grove and Proctor (1966) and by Loveday (1972), who

consider the public meeting to be too susceptible to control, by restricting the flow of information and by neutralising creative discussion, for the classic form to be little more than a public relations exercise. Perhaps the generally poor attendance records reveal the public's interpretation of them, and of the frequent embarrassing performances given by planners in response to questions or in the lecture component of such meetings. Despite their popularity with politicians, there is a wealth of evidence from case studies that the usefulness for planning purposes of the lay input from public meetings is small, and that resort to them should only be within a comprehensive programme using a diversity of participatory means.

(c) *Information Documentation*

Information publications of the local authorities generally constitute the major element in their publicity programmes. The publications may often occur in a series, including reports of surveys and statements of policy intention, and monthly or quarterly bulletins or news-sheets. The cost of producing documents is often substantial; therefore, there is a clear need to ascertain the purpose of each document, and the public to which it is aimed. In presenting its draft strategies for public comment, the South Hampshire Technical Unit produced a simple brochure, a more comprehensive yet simply expressed handbook, and a substantial draft strategy document with the supporting arguments aired in such a manner as to permit a reasonable appraisal of the advocated plan solution; thus, three different 'publics' were catered for with a level of detail sufficient to meet their particular information requirements. Needless to say, as the documents became more comprehensive and bulky, a charge was levied for them. In the Coventry structure plan programme, a publicity campaign was mounted which included the use of the local press for periodic official statements and information releases, the production of a separate newspaper *Forward* providing a simplified version of the ten survey reports, the limited circulation of the ten survey report volumes to selected interest groups and associations to provoke comment, the production of a second news-sheet *Struc-*

ture Plan, and the preparation of 'participation papers' describing the publicity techniques used in the Structure Plan programme. To ensure the mass publicity documentation was written in a suitable style, free-lance journalists were retained to produce the articles; the journalists were constrained only by the need to submit copies to the council for verification of the *factual* content; the discretion of which matters to emphasize was placed with the authors.

Some planning authorities have experimented with citizen's handbooks, in some instances restricting their content to planning matters, and in others extending their scope to outline most of the functions of local government. Such publications require careful detailing, and rest upon specialist skills not frequently in the compass of the conventional planner; they provide scope for nominating planning matters currently or soon to require public comment, listing agencies and groups committed to planning issues and capable of providing an advocacy service, educating the readership, and so on. However, there are intrinsic disadvantages in this medium; the publications are implicitly catering for the literate and the usually intellectually conscientious sections of the community, and the *per capita* costs are likely to be high.

On the matter of publicity documentation it is as well to be reminded on the number of occasions or phases in a total plan-making process at which information needs to be broadcast; the Skeffington Report (1969) comments on the phases as data collection and revelation, 'statement of choices', 'statement of proposals' and disclosure of the preferred or operationalised alternative plan solution. In addition to the frequency of publication it is necessary to be aware of the need to discriminate between the various 'publics' to receive the information; Stringer and Taylor (1974) have commented on the need to positively discriminate in favour of the information-deprived sections of the community, and that attention should be directed to their peculiar needs possibly by home-oriented publicity. The means of contacting and cultivating the traditional non-joining sections of the community require further experiment, but specific information-dissemination programmes to such sections, if they may be geographically identified, might profit the entire democratic process in the long term (Horrocks, 1972).

*(d) Questionnaire Surveys*

In his argument that public opinion surveys would help plan-making agencies to be aware of public preferences and attitudes, England (1974) has noted that many planners and public relations officers implicitly relegate this technique to an order below that of exhibitions, information brochures and public meetings. The reasons for this are complex, and often founded on an ignorance of the demands of an efficiently produced questionnaire designed to elicit responses on precise matters material to the issues under investigation preparatory to the preparation of a plan or policy. The whole matter of social surveys and public opinion surveys has been subjected to considerable debate; the allegations that such techniques successfully rediscover the obvious reveal significant ignorance of the scientific method which is at the basis of the survey, and expose the lack of experience in preparing a meaningful survey schedule or conducting such an inquiry, or in analysing anything other than a simple questionnaire. Hoinville (1971) has remarked that the planning process is most usually geared to receiving the views and aspirations of interest groups through the medium of public inquiries, and that it has not yet developed the capacity to learn much about the complex preference structure of the community as a whole; he denies the validity of the view that those who remain silent by not participating in inquiries do not have preferences or are indifferent to alternative propositions. "Voluntary participation... is obviously an important feature of the planning process, but it does not provide anything like the complete solution."<sup>(8)</sup> The oft-quoted variables influencing individual preferences present particular complications in public opinion surveys, but they are essentially matters to be applied to the information once it has been obtained and applied to the development of the sample to be surveyed.

Hilse (1973) has commented upon two features in surveys which may give rise to concern; the first is that the results in the survey may be significantly influenced by the 'environment' at the time of the interview, and secondly, the survey results are susceptible to manipulation by selected disclosure. Because of these, and other

<sup>(8)</sup> Hoinville (1971), p. 34.

problems, it would seem inappropriate to approach the conduct of a survey without the necessary particular skills.

A survey is a form of planned collection of data. The most common purposes of the survey are to aid description, prediction, decision-making, or the analyses of relationships between variables. The degree of skill and proficiency required to properly design surveys is not always appreciated; survey design is a long and arduous intellectual exercise requiring a clarity of specification derived best from a precise awareness of the objectives, information-scope and phenomena inter-relationships in the decision area to be investigated.

A common tragedy of survey design is the delay in the discovery of its inherent weaknesses. Such a discovery may not be made until, at the stage of data interpretation, it is found to be virtually impossible to draw meaningful conclusions from the assembled data. This unfortunate situation may be compounded by the widely-held naive concept of the questionnaire as a quick and easy avenue of 'fact-gathering'; throughout the preparation of the schedule of questions two controlling factors should be applied—why are those answers needed and what is it proposed to do with them? "A questionnaire is not just a list of questions, or a form to be filled out, it is essentially a scientific instrument for measurement and for correlation of particular kinds of data ... it has to be specially designed." (Oppenheim, 1966).

Each survey presents its own problems and difficulties, but a common sequence may be discerned:

1. determination of the purpose of the study/the hypothesis to be investigated;
2. appraisal of relevant literature and information sources;
3. assessment of suitable research methods;
4. pilot study;
5. refinement and sample definition;
6. data collection;
7. data processing;
8. data analysis;
9. assembly of the results/relationship to the hypothesis;

10. writing up the results, relating to other research, interpretation, etc.

The problem of questionnaire design is no less complex. In the practice of public involvement in the decision-making and plan-making process there is a need to appreciate the distinction between the 'descriptive' and the 'analytical' survey. Descriptive surveys are designed to gather facts; they are typically censuses, public opinion polls, market research investigations; they are frequently numerative, requiring quantitative expressions and results; they may be, however, qualitative in the expression of attitudes or preferences. This use of the questionnaire requires precise appreciation of the most appropriate questions, question wording, question sequence and question type to elicit the information from which open interpretations may be made, conclusions drawn, and, if necessary, policies defined. Analytical surveys are more properly the concern of those with the necessary technical competence to appreciate the significance of the relationships of variables. Such surveys, and their complex questionnaires are most likely beyond the comprehension level of the public in general. However, use of the analytical device may be made by specially articulate and informed community groups within participation strategies such as the Charrette, the Delphi process and similar sophisticated popular decision processes.

A recent examination of the use of the questionnaire technique in the Los Angeles Goals Program and the planning process leading to the preparation of the South Hampshire Draft Structure Plan (Fagence, 1974) revealed an incontrovertible fact, that the questionnaire is a sophisticated device which it is too easy to misuse; in addition, too little attention is paid to the benefits accruing from a properly conducted survey, even to ensuring a usable response rate from the distribution of a mail questionnaire (Scott, 1961; Veiga, 1974). The Skeffington Committee distinguished between those surveys which are to establish facts, and those which are to ascertain opinions, conceding that the public might participate in gathering the first type of information but reserving the opinion surveys to specialists in the art. This distinction needs to be borne in mind when scheduling surveys for the early phases of the planning process.



There must be some doubt on the validity of the design of a questionnaire to function simultaneously as an information device, as a means of soliciting preferences, and as a means to generate further issues for examination (Coventry, 1973).

(e) *Documentary Reporting—the Media*

There may be some apprehension in turning to the media for assistance in communicating the local planning authority's 'message', particularly as some authorities have suffered from sensational or distorted reporting. The Skeffington Committee, recognising this dilemma, advocated that the remedy really lay with the local authority, and that the most advantageous coverage of local government enterprise or activity would be likely if the media was provided with a regular flow of information. Such regular events as press conferences would "help towards maintaining a dialogue with the press and through them with the public",<sup>(9)</sup> and the frequency of the occasion would contribute to the desirability of having specialist reporters who would draw upon a developing background of planning knowledge to identify and responsibly report matters which are judged to be of interest to the community and worthy of comment.

Each of the media outlets operates within peculiar constraints; the time constraint of 'going to press' or 'going to air' is significant and should be realised by local planning authorities when timing their release of news items. A second constraint of significance is the variable interpretation of their clientele made by each media type; the determining factors to secure coverage are (a) local (or national) significance, and (b) the editor's interpretation of what constitutes *his* public's interest. Thus, as Skeffington records, the more likely and stimulating citizen participation in planning becomes, the more responsible will the media become. Space in print and on the air is not particularly expensive, so that most planning authorities could afford to make considerable use of such publicity opportunities; in contrast, however, television is a very expensive medium, and of very immediate impact. Therefore, it is unlikely television can be used for extended and comprehensive coverage of planning matters.

<sup>(9)</sup> Skeffington (1969), p. 19.

although some channels have a fetish for fashionable material which might include planning issues over a restricted number of weeks; therefore, any opportunity which occurs should be capitalised by the avoidance of detail and the concentration on simple but essential issues, particularly those which are obviously visual.

Alter (1961) has remarked upon the potential impact of television: "It has an audience in the millions, ready to be inspired or bored, their tastes uplifted or demeaned, their minds enlightened or blunted."<sup>(10)</sup> The opportunities for media influence are not always confined to the institutionalised planning departments. In recent years the BBC in Britain and the ABC in Australia have deliberately made opportunities available to various community interest groups to produce their own programmes in order to communicate 'their' side of an issue. Many of these episodes have concentrated on planning issues—motorways/freeways, environmental dereliction, inner city renewal, recreational provision, population control and so on. Some of the programmes have been performed before a live audience invited to put questions after opening statements, thereby extending the participation format. The importance of this development is such that where such opportunities for public exposure of issues in this temporarily less conventional manner do not exist, perhaps the local planning authorities could add their weight to that of the local interest groups to persuade the local radio and television channels to make more of these opportunities available.

Stringer and Taylor (1974) noted that the local media was the principal source of information (Table 7.1) on a particular planning issue for the non-joiners, the less highly educated. For this reason, if for no other (though there are other competing reasons), the local planning authorities might consider resorting to the use of a full newspaper supplement to communicate with those sections of the community usually outside the scope of more intellectual contact. As a further ploy, some authorities have developed the cartoon approach to communications.<sup>(11)</sup> No matter which of the communication media is selected for the exposure in an educational manner

<sup>(10)</sup> Alter (1961), p. 106.

<sup>(11)</sup> For example, 'Fred and Dr. Luts' used in the Sheffield-Rotherham land use and transportation study.

TABLE 7.1 Principal sources of information *Sources of Information about Public Meetings*

	Stringer & Ewans (1968)	GLC (undated)	
		(a)	(b)
Leaflet	12	9	13
Circular letter	10	—	—
Newspaper	44	43	30
Friend or relative	17		
Through work	8	14	12
Through study	2	—	—
Other	6	12	12
Don't remember	1	1	1
Posters	—	10	11
Local associations	—	11	18

Sources of data: Stringer & Ewans (1968), Table 2. GLC (undated), Table 2.

the process of local plan-making, the comments of a television producer are pertinent to the range of considerations to be made in the design of the programme: "television communicates with the citizen on levels which are emotional as well as technical. In assessing the *educational* relevance of this communication, I am reminded of some words of Yeats: 'only that which does not teach, cry out, persuade, condescend, explain is irresistible'."<sup>(12)</sup>

(f) *Other Means*

The five means considered so far in this section do not exhaust the list of possible techniques to achieve a public awareness that a planning process is in motion. However, they constitute some of the more common participation expressions. Brief comments on a number of others in the following paragraphs throw into relief the compass of techniques which facilitate a measure of awareness in the community but which essentially fall short of a meaningful contribution to plan-making or policy-making; however, it is necessary to remark that the generalisations made throughout this section may be invalidated by particularly dynamic expressions of any of the means discussed.

<sup>(12)</sup> Dutot (1968), p. 76.

(1) *Ideas competitions.* The city council of Coventry, frequently in the van of experimentation with participation techniques, have reported the sponsorship of an ideas competition,<sup>(13)</sup> with the successful participants being recipients of a token award and the opportunity to discuss the ideas with the city planning officer. The invitation was extended to comment upon priorities and special planning problems. About six hundred submissions were made. This means of participation was suggested by Geddes (see p. 104).

(2) *Referenda.* The referendum technique for measuring public opinion closely resembles the election process, and as such it is capable of being comprehensible to every franchised citizen. Gallup (1971) has indicated the derivation of the technique which complements rather than competes with the conventional public opinion surveys. The technique is dependent upon a careful analysis of the representativeness of census districts, and a thorough preparation in the district to be canvassed. Both the advantages and disadvantages of the self-administered questionnaire technique are repeated in the referendum method advocated by Gallup: the ballot procedure affords the respondent time to ponder upon the answers, and it is not susceptible to the manipulation by the interviewer. However it is best suited to a single issue or a small number of issues, and it is certainly not suitable for the collection of a mass of information.

When used on a comprehensive scale, as in Switzerland<sup>(14)</sup> and Australia, and when participation is not optional, the issues need to be sharp and expressed in simple terms. The referendum technique is appropriate to legal and constitutional matters, and in the representative sample form it is appropriate to gauge likely public response to easily identifiable issues. Its use for planning purposes might be dependent on the delegation of planning powers to the district level, with a street-by-street organisation; at such a level a reasonable expression of grass roots opinion should be possible from the use of the Gallup technique.

<sup>(13)</sup> *Town and Country Planning*, November, 1964, p. 443.

<sup>(14)</sup> See for example the classic account in Adams (1948), *The Swiss Confederation*, London, MacMillan, chap. VI.

(3) *Public inquiries*. Recent experience of mammoth public inquiries in Britain<sup>(15)</sup> has revealed a massive volume of paperwork, and a bewildering array of expert talent; yet such quasi-judicial extravaganzas represent only a small proportion of the whole inquiry programme. Many inquiries take only a day or two to hear the planning evidence and argument, with the result that the local media are scarcely interested. "Taken as a whole, planning appeals represent thousands of hours of patient investigation, in which claims are delicately balanced—those of the individual against the community, of commercial progress against aesthetic preservation, of short-term benefit against long-term advantage."<sup>(16)</sup> The increasing complexity of planning issues has gradually brought about a change to the nature of the local public inquiry; the original conception of the inquiry, to consider argument between people with a direct interest in a development, has been extended to cope with participation by interested and affected third parties. Wraith (1971) has commented that the inquiry has become an examination of policies, with the inquisition becoming increasingly by the public rather than on behalf of the Minister in the British planning system. He contends that local planning authorities have conspicuously contributed to this trend, helping to convert the public inquiries into general public debates by their willingness to explain their purposes and policies (Wraith and Lamb, 1971). The culmination of the trend in British practice has been the establishment of the non-statutory commission or panel of inquiry which operates according to its own rules, including undertaking its own research, and questioning those called to give evidence.

Wraith (1971) considers the current model of public inquiry is a method of citizen participation in the making of policy, a method which has been engineered by the public through a slow process of demand for and use of opportunities to be heard at the sessions, and accompanied by a response by government to establish types of inquiry capable of reviewing the complexity of technical evidence submitted in connection with large scale development proposals. In

<sup>(15)</sup> Roskill Commission investigating the alternative locations of a proposed third airport for London; the Greater London Development Plan Inquiry.

<sup>(16)</sup> Wraith (1971), p. 145.

order that such matters be aired in public, it has been found necessary to restrict the range of persons entitled to be heard at an inquiry,<sup>(17)</sup> although it is in the spirit of the legislation that the selection of the participants would be representative of the spectrum of opinion pertinent to the issues being examined (Layfield and Whybrow, 1973; DOE, 1973). The examination in public of structure plan proposals is incidentally dependent upon a meaningful public discussion of the matters *before* the inquiry is held, in order that the range of contentious issues has been significantly diminished. Thus, the public inquiry may act as a means of citizen participation in the guise of a public forum.

(4) There are many other techniques which are essentially public-awareness oriented, i.e., means of receiving rather than transmitting. The common denominator in each is that the initiative for plan and policy-making and for the taking of decisions rests with the local planning authority. Skeffington has argued that "publicity alone is not participation; but it is the first essential step towards it".<sup>(18)</sup>

It is to those means of participation more capable of achieving and sustaining a potentially high level of impact on the decision-making process in planning that attention is now drawn.

## 2. INNOVATIVE MEANS

In most planning systems conspicuous attempts are being made to provide more effective means of achieving an intelligent dialogue between the planners and the planned. The experimentation is sometimes undertaken voluntarily by local planning authorities such as (in Britain) Coventry, Cheshire, Cambridge; some regional planning teams have attempted less conventional techniques, for example those of Sheffield/Rotherham, South Hampshire; while some national agencies have sponsored research of the kind presently undertaken by the Linked Research Project co-ordinated at the University of Sheffield, a project which is sponsored by DOE. Planning authorities

<sup>(17)</sup> Section 3(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1972, has withdrawn the 'right to be heard' provisions of section 9 of the 1971 Act: participation in the proceedings is by invitation only, although attendance is not statutorily restricted.

<sup>(18)</sup> Skeffington (1969), para. 5(c).

were exhorted by the Skeffington Committee to experiment, to adapt the conventional techniques and to develop new methods to achieve dynamic and meaningful participation, even at the risk of occasional failure.<sup>(19)</sup> Experimentation is undoubtedly taking place, if for no other reason than that it is an exciting and potentially productive activity. However, the experimental efforts need to be constrained by the realisation that there is not yet a consensus between the potential parties to participation on the acceptable level and nature of participation consistent with the prevailing democratic systems of government. Some of the philosophical dimensions of this matter were considered in Part 1 of this book.

A recurring dilemma is the differential contribution to decision-making of which the particular participants or groups are capable; the groups, or individuals within those groups have identifiable competences which renders them differentially capable of assuming responsibility in the planning process. It should be obvious from the complexity of decision-making in planning that it is unlikely that any rational participant would be able to claim a consistent degree of competence, and his opinions of consistent relevance throughout the process; special, even best, contributions are more likely to be appropriate at identifiable stages in the process. Quite apart from the omnicompetence that would be necessary to participate at each stage of the plan-making, there will be aspects of the deliberations which are sensitive, requiring a reduced audience for their discussion. The best that can be expected, therefore, are opportunities to participate when and where the participant's contribution becomes indispensable. "Participation programmes that match mechanisms and opportunities for involvement with the characteristics of potential participants will save time and increase the relevancy of the effort."<sup>(20)</sup> To extend this consideration a little further, it is necessary to be aware that the degree of intensity of a participation programme is largely prescribed by the nature of the planning issue, and that participation is an inevitable phenomenon mainly when the issue is controversial and likely to affect more than a few people. A quantitative test of this hypothesis may be the attendance levels at public

<sup>(19)</sup> Skeffington (1969), para. 203.

<sup>(20)</sup> NIPC (1973), vol. I, p. 49.

inquiries. The nature of most planning issues generating a demand for citizen participation, and the characteristics of the potential participants, seem to suggest that solution-oriented participation is more likely to be successful than for any other type of planning situation (NIPC, 1973).<sup>(21)</sup>

It is not possible in the space remaining in this book to review in a comprehensive way the more innovative and potentially impactful means of participation used in other areas of public or private policy-making. Therefore, the brief discussion of the few selected examples which follows achieves little more than a description of the technique and a comment on the uses which have been made of them in planning and other contexts. Linking these techniques together are three common denominators: each is potentially capable of being used in the conventional decision-making systems of government, i.e. the output is usable for policy-making purposes; each requires an above-average intelligence level of the participants; and each is dependent upon the careful selection of the participants, i.e. the degree of representativeness required for the particular exercise. It is these criteria which significantly distinguish the techniques about to be reviewed from those considered earlier, which were essentially associated with a broader mass participation base. The techniques to be considered are (a) the Delphi Method, (b) the Nominal Group Method, (c) the Charrette, (d) gaming-simulation, and scenario-writing.

(a) *The Delphi Method*

There is a growing literature on the Delphi method (Hudson, 1974; Pill, 1971), particularly brought about by the realisation of its achievements in certain decision-making situations and its potential applicability to many others, including some areas of plan-making. The Delphi technique is essentially a means of combining the knowledge and abilities of a diverse group of experts and applying them

<sup>(21)</sup> This suggests that participation is more likely to be meaningful where the issues are simple, and where they may be easily resolved, and that it is likely to be more difficult where the issues are complex, comprehensive, philosophical or conceptual, strategic, and in need of lengthy and involved debate.



to the development of a consensus towards the production of policies or plans. The technique was developed in the Rand Corporation in the early 1950's, and was borne out of a concern with the possibility of using expert opinions and predictions in policy-making. The first significant use of the technique occurred in 1953 when it was adapted to solicit the opinions of experts on atomic warfare as part of a defence scheme (Dalkey and Helmer, 1963). Other applications of the technique for strategic policy predictions have been recorded, but its first adaptation for planning purposes was in its use in a study of forecasting technological events (Gordon and Helmer, 1964). In recent years it has been applied in the areas of education innovation, industry, social planning at the community level, and developments in medicine.<sup>(22)</sup>

The traditional method for arriving at a consensus among a panel of experts is through a round-table discussion of the problem. This method is susceptible to the undue influence of psychological factors such as dominant personalities, reluctance to retract publicly expressed opinions, the 'bandwagon' influence of majority opinion, and so on. Thus, the Delphi technique has been devised to ameliorate these and similar difficulties by providing for anonymity, for controlled feedback, and for a 'scored' or statistical response. Anonymity is achieved by the use of questionnaires with the responses being recorded separately, known only to the controller of the exercise, and not attributed to specific individuals when they are communicated to other members of the panel. Controlled feedback is achieved by the conduct of several 'rounds' in which the opinions generated in one round are summarised and communicated back to the panel for use in the considered responses of the following round. In the conclusion of the exercise, as throughout, the group opinion is expressed in terms of a statistical score which accommodates a reflection of the opinion of each participant; there is no pressure to arrive at a consensus.

The Delphi technique involves the use of a postal questionnaire.<sup>(23)</sup> this has the advantage that the experts can be widely separated geo-

<sup>(22)</sup> Examples of recent use are listed in Hudson (1974); and Pill (1971).

<sup>(23)</sup> Dalkey (1969) has indicated the possible deployment of on-line computer facilities as a substitute.

graphically yet still participate because no physical gathering is required, and they may participate at their own convenience. Thus, the process overcomes the problems of poor attendance levels, the tendency for nominees rather than the chosen experts to attend, the tendency for certain individuals to dominate the proceedings because of their charisma. For the participants, there may be a bonus in that their knowledge of the subject matter may be extended by the revealed expressions of other participants. The process requires considerable effort on the part of the controller.

In most Delphic surveys a series of four questionnaires is used, one in each 'round'. The first should be designed to solicit the most comprehensive expression of ideas or opinions on the matter under consideration, by carefully worded questions. Upon receipt by the controller, the responses are tabulated and summarised; the full inventory is despatched to the participants with a second questionnaire which seeks a response indicating agreement or disagreement with the inventory of propositions. Although advocacy and debate are the objectives of the second questionnaire, respondents frequently modify their own positions on the subject as a result of the awareness of other tenable opinions gained from the inventory. As before, upon receipt, the responses are tabulated and summarised, and the refinements are returned to the participants with an invitation to comment upon and refine the inventory further. It is usual for the responses of individuals to be identified in relation to those of the other members of the panel, and comment sought to explain the variation if a significant difference occurs. Most Delphi exercises extend to four rounds. In the final round, the refined list of opinions or ideas are voted on, that is they are ranked or rated. The outcome is a statement of ideas or opinions, in tabulated form. It is unusual for a single decision or proposition to emerge, so that the role of the traditional decision-makers is not pre-empted; rather, their role should have been made easier as a result of the Delphi deliberations.

The Delphi technique is particularly useful in identifying problems, needs, in setting goals and priorities, and in identifying and evaluating alternatives; but in order for these characteristics to be realised, the panel needs to be composed of participants of reasonably comparable knowledge of the subject under consideration. The principal

disadvantage is that it is best suited to participants who can express themselves well in writing. The required organisation is considerable, and a high degree of skill is required in the phrasing of meaningful and pertinent questions, and in paraphrasing and summarising the long responses to those questions for feedback into the process. Welty (1972) has considered the problems of selecting the experts for Delphi exercises; although he has not resolved the problem he has suggested that there might not be a performance of lesser calibre from participants with less than expert status. This would accommodate the use of the 'intelligent laymen' in Delphic surveys concerned with planning matters.

The NIPC (1973) examination of innovative techniques capable of use in planning suggested that the Delphi process might be used to set the directions of planning studies, predict the impact of the plan or forecast the outcome of alternative courses of action, to discover the cause-effect relationships in planning problems, to discover new information sources, and to define policies to shape or implement plans. Turoff (1970) has examined the use of Delphi to explore policy issues in planned urban development, and has indicated that *policy-Delphi* may serve as a useful support for, and not as a substitute for, the conventional committee approach to policy formation. His use of Delphi was restricted to the circulation of statements, arguments, comments and discussion, and as such was a policy-analysis rather than a policy-decision tool. Skutsch and Schofer (1973) have discussed the use of the Delphi technique in goal setting for planning. They concluded that the technique (*goals-Delphi*) has a high potential applicability to the processes of goal and objective development, and may be used as an 'election type device' and in an 'advisory capacity', although from the case studies contributing to this view it may be observed that participants perhaps used were not of an 'expert' classification.<sup>(24)</sup> More recently Molnar and Kammerud (1975) have reported on a research programme designed to discover

<sup>(24)</sup> It is reported that in a Delphic attempt to achieve a goals hierarchy, the actual material produced by the participants was considered of less importance to the decision-makers than the involvement of the citizens which was achieved in this case. Delphi was used to prise open a channel of community communication previously nonexistent.

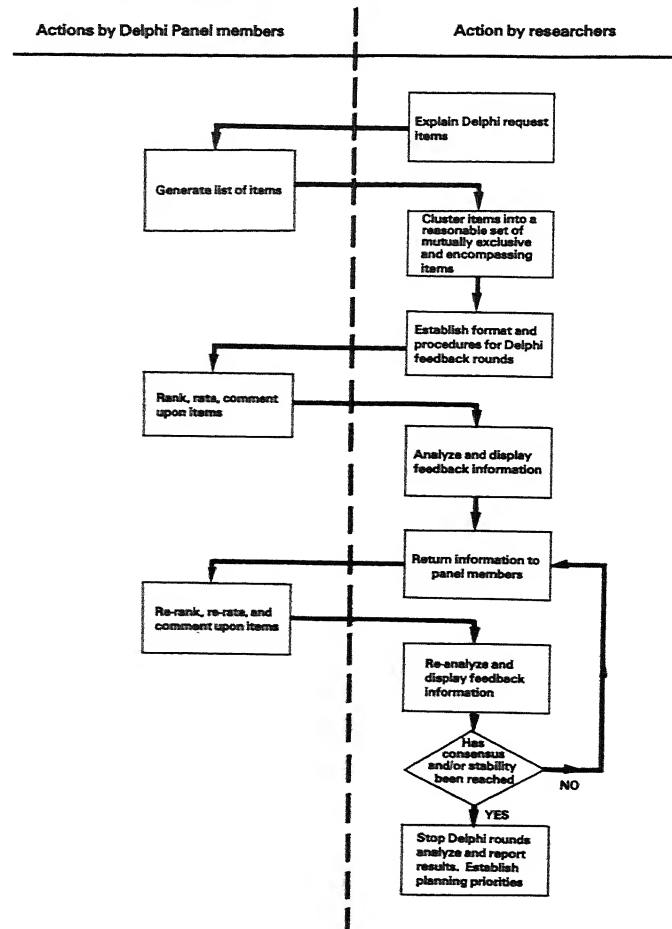


Fig. 7.1. Procedure used in a Delphi exercise (based on Molnar and Kammerud (1975), p. 27).

“those components of life about which there is dissatisfaction and... how amenable those components might be to positive change through the application of resources.”<sup>(25)</sup> Their use of the Delphi

<sup>(25)</sup> Molnar and Kammerud (1975), p. 23.

technique (Fig. 7.1) was predicated on the assumption that a panel of experts in community design, architecture, engineering, social science, planning and other related disciplines would be able to reach a consensus on some items of dissatisfaction, their relative importance, and the scope for bringing about change. The high intellectual power of the panel members conformed to the criterion of 'expertness' required for the Delphi technique. In contrast, the report of an alleged Delphic survey conducted by Dane County Regional Planning Commission (1971) revealed the disaster which befalls the dilution of the Delphi method; a mailed questionnaire was given mass distribution, it achieved a response rate of less than 10%, and it was subsequently conceded that the posed questions were poorly drawn. Clearly, the Delphi technique is not one to be considered lightly, or to be launched from an ill-prepared or ill-considered base.<sup>(26)</sup>

(b) *The Nominal Group Method*

The Nominal Group technique is designed to overcome many of the psycho-social problems common to conventional group meetings. Its purpose is to achieve a high degree of innovation and creativity in the identification of strategic problems and the development of appropriate programmes of solution. These objectives are achieved in a manner which is different from the conventional brainstorming method; therefore, it will be treated separately. A brief consideration of brainstorming as a technique will be made later.

The technique is, by definition, a situation in which individuals work in the presence of others but do not interact; by structuring a discussion through the Nominal Group method, all individuals participate, the central purpose of the discussion is maintained, and the participants become thoroughly committed and involved. The mechanics of the Nominal Group method significantly ameliorate many of the problems common to the most usual form of group meetings, such as the personal inhibitions of individuals, the reluctance to express anything less than a well developed idea, the tend-

<sup>(26)</sup> Recently, Sackman (1975) has cast doubt on the suitability of the Delphi method.

ency to focus upon a particular train of thought, the ease of distraction, the tendency for certain personalities to dominate the session, the ease of abbreviated consensus, the tendency for the public to defer to peers, the problems of achieving agreement over semantics and procedures, and so on. It is reported that the maximum effect of this method is realised in the development of a range of alternative solutions to a problem, and the reduction through analytical discussion of the inventory to one or two choices which are generally acceptable.

A large group of participants may be accommodated by this method, but the total complement needs to be dispersed into groups of approximately equal size for discussion purposes, each with its own 'recorder' and set of display facilities. The Nominal Group method is conducted in a sequence of five or seven stages (NIPC, 1973; Delbecq and Van de Ven, 1971; Van de Ven, 1972).

1. *Identification of the problem/question*: the crucial matters needing consideration and solution are identified by the meeting convener, are tabulated and displayed.

2. *Nominal group activity*: each participant is required to independently consider the posed questions, and to privately list his responses. It is usual for the first responses to be logical, and for there to be a second effort after a lull in 'creativity' or attention. The silent listing of ideas is generally considered to be more productive, both quantitatively and qualitatively than verbal presentations during which most participants stop thinking independently and concentrate or react to the most recently expressed idea.

3. *Listing of ideas*: each participant is required to nominate his ideas in sequence, and the group's recorder to tabulate them. In this period of exposure, an episode of controlled brainstorming is generated with the revelation of an idea by one participant triggering off further ideas from the others. This step endures until all the ideas have been tabulated.

4. *Discussion of ideas*: the fourth step involves discussion, debate, questioning and the advocacy of the ideas which are considered sequentially from the displayed list. At the conclusion of this discussion each participant is issued with cards to independently and priva-

tely record which of the ideas considered seem to be most important.

5. *Ranking of ideas*: each participant is required to order the ideas, allocating to each a numerical value consistent with the total number of ideas sorted. The 'votes' are then allocated to each of the ideas from each of the participants, and the score for each idea is displayed.

6. *Further discussion*:

and

7. *Final ranking of ideas*:

If there is any doubt about the scoring, or any significant disagreement with the final list of preferences or the order of them, further discussion may be necessary to clarify the matters and to achieve a greater degree of consensus.

The Nominal Group technique is designed to give each person a maximum opportunity to participate, and it has other distinct advantages over the more usual form of meeting. Verbal skill is not essential to making an effective contribution or bringing the group to a decision, and the relative prestige of participants is minimised; the process focuses discussion on the desired topic and produces a high volume of ideas; polarization and long, emotional arguments are avoided; the premature omission of an idea is eliminated; pressure to conform to a group norm is reduced; ideas tend to become anonymous and depersonalized among the large list of ideas; focus is on the idea, rather than the author; visual focus makes it possible to handle many more ideas than can be handled in the conventional, interacting group meeting run by a chairman; conflicting ideas do not have to be resolved as they are discussed; and the loss of good ideas in the majority verdict process is avoided.

This variation of the Brainstorming technique has been developed by Delbecq and Van de Ven in the Business School of the University of Wisconsin. It was developed to provide the decision-forming element in a program planning model to overcome the problems of maximising the variable inputs of fragmented interests, and to afford "an explicit process for structuring the character of participation within each phase of planning."<sup>(27)</sup> The procedure has been implemented in a number of planning situations. For example, Delbecq

<sup>(27)</sup> Delbecq and Van de Ven (1971), p. 4.

and Van de Ven have used the Nominal Group process with a community planning programme. In addition, Delbecq acted in a consultancy capacity to Dane County Regional Planning Commission, in which the implementation of the process produced "a rich identification of citizen concerns and goals"<sup>(28)</sup> despite poor attendance levels; in practice it has been found that the technique may be applied to most decision-forming situations, but its most efficient uses have been in the identification of citizen problems and views on general community and environmental issues. However the method's authors caution users against the impression that it may be implemented easily: "considerable skill is required to activate the process".<sup>(29)</sup>

*Brainstorming.* This technique was originated and first used by Osborn (1957) in 1939 in an advertising agency. In recent years its use has been extended to major commercial companies, the armed services, various levels of government. Despite some criticism and developments of the basic form (i.e. such as the Nominal Group process) the technique has achieved wide acceptance as a means of facilitating creative thinking. The purpose of the method is to free the participants from their inhibitions, self-criticism and criticism by others in order that, in response to a particular problem, they may produce as many different ideas as possible, on the assumption that the larger the number of ideas produced, the greater the probability of achieving an effective solution. There are four basic principles: (1) adverse criticism of ideas is postponed until the full list of possible solutions has been attained; (2) no horizon of realisation is set on the ideas—it is easier to reduce the horizon than to upgrade the idea; (3) the target is the maximum number of ideas from the participants; (4) the combination and improvement of tabulated ideas to produce new and different ideas is desirable. In the original Osborn scheme the value of participant interaction to extend the inventory of ideas was emphasised. However, this concept was not to be opened for mass participation; Osborn suggested that the optimum size for a Brainstorming session would be five to ten participants, which is within the range recommended for the Nominal Group process.

<sup>(28)</sup> Dane County (1971), p. 27.

<sup>(29)</sup> Delbecq and Van de Ven (1971), p. 31.



Apart from the 'in-house' Brainstorming sessions, or 'think-tanks', conducted in the offices of some planning agencies, there are few recorded uses of the technique. Possibly, its use would be restricted by (a) the number of participants considered by Osborn to be most suitable (although the groups could be replicated and a session held to synthesise their output, as occurs in the Charrette process), and by (b) the desirability of the participants having some familiarity with the broad scope of planning. The latter of these restrictions could be overcome by the use of a control group which contributed to the rationalising sessions at which each of the 'free-wheeling' ideas were generated; unfortunately, this constraint might generate an antipathy between the 'free-wheeling' public participants and the 'control' rationalists from government or the professions. However, the technique has a high potential as a learning device, even if its operational creativity value is suspect.

(c) *The Charrette*

Like the Delphi process, the Charrette is both a planning process strategy and an educational process. The Charrette is a means of developing a community plan by achieving a working relationship of people within the community and those from outside (i.e., the consultants, the local government officials and politicians), and by providing a learning environment, to heighten the awareness of the community to the intricacies of planning, and of the outsiders to the problems within the community perceived by those resident there. Typically, therefore, the process involves citizens, institutional planners, community representatives and politicians, working together in an informal atmosphere. The crucial feature of the Charrette, is its imposition of a time constraint on the plan generating episode; from its French origins, the Charrette process implies a brief period of intense activity in order to complete the agreed task in the time allocated.

The Charrette has four essential ingredients (Riddick, 1971):

1. a problem to be solved co-operatively;
2. a group of interested citizens willing to co-operate;

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3. professional experts to assist with the technical determinations as they arise—these experts may come from within the community or from outside;
4. a commitment from the prevailing local government power structure to put into effect the plans and recommendations which emerge from the Charrette.

Thus, it is a decision-making process in which the decisions are made and implemented at the community or district level, with the involvement of the local population, the co-operation of consultants and local government officials, and the support of local politicians and 'city hall'. One of the invaluable benefits of the Charrette is predicated on the assumption that if the local residents have dynamically involved themselves in producing the community plan there should be significant popular support for the end product. Although "the concept of citizen participation is fundamental to a Charrette"<sup>(30)</sup> the technique is not one of *mass* involvement; however, one of the organisational implications of the technique is its openness to public scrutiny, comment and suggestion.

A Charrette in planning frequently spans a period from one to two weeks, incorporating daytime and evening sessions. Its significance, i.e. apart from its citizen involvement potential, is that it translates protest into constructive action, and it was this potential which particularly attracted it to the United States Office of Education as a means of rendering the design of school and community building complexes relevant to the needs of the community (USOE, undated). The first use of the technique by USOE was in 1969, in a ghetto area in Baltimore (Maryland).

The Charrette typically passes through four phases (Riddick, 1971; Mossman, 1973):

1. *preparatory phase*: This phase, extending perhaps over a period of three or four months is that in which the community, once having decided to take action on a particular issue, sets in motion the organisation necessary to bring about the production of a plan. The organisation will include the formation of a steering committee of

<sup>(30)</sup> Riddick (1971), p. 5.

local residents who have both the time and the commitment to attend to the gathering of information to provide the data base for the subsequent deliberations on the plan. In addition to this committee, the organisation is dependent upon the selection of a Charrette manager<sup>(31)</sup> who effectively becomes the executive officer.

2. *'discovery'*: The first few days, or sessions of the Charrette are spent in familiarising the participants and the flow of public observers with the assembled data, and in generating an environment in which the participants feel able to freely interact, exchange views, comment meaningfully on the problems in need of solution. It is intended that this phase is conducive to as much resident participation as it is possible to solicit, with a particularly loosely organised structure for discussion, viewing the data, and generally sampling the environment.

3. *'consolidation'*: After a period of general contributions and discussion involving local residents, politicians, consultants, local government officials and even interested persons from other districts, the third phase commences, in which the interested participants organise themselves into working groups, each group concentrating upon a particular problem. These groups are expected to precisely identify the community's problems, to estimate the likely causes, and to consider some of the resources necessary to achieve the alleviation of those problems. In order to maintain a realistic perspective on the problems and the possible means of solution, most if not all of the working groups would be expected to draw upon expert advice from architects, planners and other professionals, and to solicit the support of the district's elected representative on the council. The deliberations of these groups are expected to be summarised and made generally available.

4. *'proposal development'*: The final phase consists of the working groups reviewing their reports in the light of public comment passed on them, the presentation at an open public meeting of the revised report and its plan implications, the synthesis of the various proposed problem-solutions by indications of public preference expressed

<sup>(31)</sup> It is recommended that the Charrette manager is not a local resident because he needs to be identified with all the sections and interests in the community rather than with a selected number of them (Riddick, 1971, p. 25).

before a 'jury' consisting of individuals who occupy an elective position in the community or who are placed in a governmental position with a degree of control over the allocation of resources. After the public meeting, the working groups would be expected to rework their proposals in the hindsight of 'official' comment in order to present to the traditional decision-makers a comprehensive community plan which, whilst tending to express some of the local idealism, is tempered with feasibility and realism.

The short time-scale for phases two to four is urged to facilitate the generation of a dynamic community interest which is capable of being sustained because the terminal date for the production of the plan is seen to be imminent. At the final conference session the total plan and the implementation strategy are publicly presented for conformation; the consensus which emerges from such wide participation is expected to become part of the local council's plans, but the realisation of this expectation is largely dependent upon the good faith and abilities of the local officials and elected representatives who have participated in the plan-making process. In Baltimore, the Charrette process has been woven into the city's district planning programme, each district having its own planner working within it. From this arrangement have emerged community plans for the rehabilitation of an area of obsolescent housing (MUND) and for the comprehensive development of a district (Govans). The Charrette has been described as "a brave attempt to democratize planning";<sup>(32)</sup> it forms a significant technique in the Baltimore district planning programme, with the resulting plans being presented to the city for inclusion in its capital improvements programme and its capital budget for eventual implementation (Baltimore, 1972). It was a technique considered for use in the North Eastern Illinois Regional Study (NIPC, 1973).

(d) *Other Means*

Two other techniques merit brief consideration; these are gaming-simulation, and scenario-writing. These two techniques attempt to

<sup>(32)</sup> Scriven, B. (1972). Charrettes—an approach to Design Participation. *Architect's Journal*, 23 February 1972, pp. 411-12.

alleviate the problems of conceptualising something which has not yet been experienced, differentiating by degree of certainty likely future states; of these two, gaming-simulation has the advantage of 'rewarding' the participants.

(1) *Gaming-simulation.* This technique has the benefit of replicating the complexity of planning situations in terms which may be comprehended by the layman, and of providing an arena in which the coincident and conflicting interests of the public and the planning agency may be represented. In addition, the participants to the 'games' benefit from experiencing the simulated roles of other participants. Typically, gaming-simulation is designed to compress time and to facilitate experimentation with a variety of option policies and proposals in order to assess their impact, and in order to gain an appreciation of the impact of selected variables. The process is frequently 'played' on a game board with a variety of pieces representing physical features (buildings, land uses, roads, etc.) which may be added to or removed from the theoretical landscape to accord with the implementation of policies or proposals. Each game requires ordering by rules and procedures, and needs some suitable means of recording the progress of the various decision episodes in order that the participants may benefit from an awareness of the results of implementing certain decisions. In practice, games may be used to aid citizen participation in two ways (Armstrong and Hobson, 1970); firstly, by representatives of interested groups playing their own roles, experiencing the inter-group interaction and witnessing the impact their performance has; and secondly by individuals acting out other roles, to gain an insight into other dimensions of the decision-making process in planning.<sup>(33)</sup>

(2) *Scenario writing.* Implicit in every forecast and every decision about the future is a scenario or set of scenarios, i.e. from a set of conditions in the present, using knowledge and intuition to predict a future environment. One of the distinct disadvantages of the technique is that trends which are not readily appreciated, and others which have not yet begun are omitted from the prediction. Brech (1963) used a scenario process to develop his vignette of Britain in

<sup>(33)</sup> For an introduction to gaming-simulation in educational contexts relevant to urban and regional planning see Taylor (1971).

1984; independent scenarios were developed for each subject or discipline, and the resulting descriptions of the future state were progressively modified to render them compatible. The technique has exciting possibilities: but for the layman, it probably remains a means of plan generation of interest, rather than of use. For practical purposes, despite the capacity to accommodate idealism and innovation, the accuracy and therefore the realism of the plans or policies produced is susceptible to incompleteness, the obscuring of interactions between the various factors, subjective assignment of values, and the perpetuation of prejudice (Abt, *et al.* 1973).

### 3. MEANS OF SELF-HELP

In the previous sections an abbreviated review has been made of a selection of the conventional and more innovative techniques which may contribute to the involvement of the public in decision-making in planning. "There seems to be a consensus... that we will not approach success in the solution of our urban crises without the expansion and further development of new forms in citizen participation. We are sensitively aware of the effects of inadequate participation and deficiencies in our representative systems... the forces of tension in society demand that such attempts (i.e. experimentation) be made—irrespective of the fact that we are yet unsure whether the result is a permanent contribution to community stability or stability."<sup>(34)</sup> Mann (1970) has commented that the trespass into innovative means of participatory democracy should be made with caution. This attitude is not uncommon in planning agencies and amongst local politicians; the repercussions of this conservatism is the development of self-help means of gaining information, and of gaining a foothold in the decision-making process. The self-help means which have been developed most conspicuously are (a) self-help manuals, (b) planning aid, (c) task forces.

<sup>(34)</sup> Mann (1970), p. 182.

(a) *Self-Help Manuals*

In the introduction to the edited proceedings of a conference on citizen self-help organisations (Turner, 1968),<sup>(35)</sup> distinction is drawn between the strategies of consensus, conflict and negotiation. On examination of these three strategies, there is a sufficiency of similarity (e.g. whether they may be used to pursue both controversial and noncontroversial goals and objectives), for the literature referring to each to be scanned for evidence of implementation guides to practitioners which may be relevant to the sometimes placid and ordered, and at other times disturbed and chaotic process of decision-making in planning. From the catalogue of such literature, and particularly the rapidly growing volume of case study material on the various protest movements, three 'manuals' have been isolated as being typical, or indicative of the type of literature available to any participants to guide their actions or their thoughts.

The first 'manual' is that produced as a supplement to a British nationally-circulated Sunday newspaper; it is essentially from the conflict-resolution mould, but because it is drawn in a particular style, its appropriateness to the consensus strategy is perhaps more noticeable. In contrast, the second manual is from experience of the United States' civil rights movement; its tone is clearly activist, but it attempts to paint a total picture of both the means for and the possible consequences of direct interventionist action. The third manual is strictly a do-it-yourself kit for aspiring planners. It treats the requirements of the planning and designing process in such a manner that any group lacking professional advice might be well able to conduct a meaningful plan-making exercise.<sup>(36)</sup>

(1) *Territorial defence*. The first of the three self-help means to be considered is the anti-establishment manual of protest (Jay, 1972), designed to reveal the vulnerabilities of a local authority's planning process and to encourage indulgence in a speight of sport, provoking the cumbersome structures of decision-making in urban and regional planning to substantiate the decisions at each stage. The popular

<sup>(35)</sup> Citizen Self-help Organizations: Relevance and Problems. Conference held at Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. March 15-17, 1967, under the auspices of the National Association of Social Workers.

<sup>(36)</sup> For a useful critical review of this manual see Dixon (1969).

tone of the colour supplement to a nationally-circulated Sunday newspaper dwells significantly on the protest that may be raised, and on the participation that may be forced upon a conspicuously unwilling local authority; its tone may be gauged from two preliminary comments—"as soon as reason reasserts itself you have a good chance of defeating the plan". and "the first rule is to attack only the plan."<sup>(37)</sup> Jay's inventory of actions and prerequisites is encyclopaedic, although it suffers from pedantry where practice has already revealed that no two situations are precisely alike and that, therefore, no typical means of protest may be used without a serious appraisal of the peculiar needs of the situation. Despite these shortcomings, Jay proceeds to the heart of the power struggle, insisting that the initial response, albeit emotional, will determine the endurance of the protest and contribute to the likelihood of its success. The catalogue of activities commences with a publicity campaign culminating in a public meeting as a demonstration of the quantity of the opposition to the proposals of the local planning agency. It is recommended that the meeting is overseen by a person of some local significance, and that from the meeting should emerge an inventory of skills available to the group from its membership. Jay is of the opinion that few communities are really aware of the wealth of human resources in their midst.

Very early in the quasi-participation process, Jay considers it advisable to develop a wide spectrum of interest in and commitment to the activities of the 'executive' group, and to concurrently create political cells with enthusiastic representatives committed to the responsibilities of meaningful representation, to consider the likely financial requirements of the protest movement, to enlist the advice of a lawyer to interpret the 'rules of the game', to enlist whatever expert skills may be needed in the peculiar circumstances of the issue, and to nominate a particularly diplomatic person to oversee the operation and to conduct the inevitably necessary campaigns of publicity.<sup>(38)</sup>

<sup>(37)</sup> Jay (1972), pp. 8-9.

<sup>(38)</sup> Jay conceives of a division of labour within the protest group into cells accommodating those with specialist skills or aptitudes. It is worthy of note, that both the readership of the newspaper containing his supplement and the nominated participants are conspicuously of the white-collar middle strata of society.



A particularly valuable item of recommendation is the classification of the national newspapers according to the type of story each editor might be willing to expose to his clientele.<sup>(39)</sup> In addition, Jay recommends the use of "the best academic and theoretical thinkers you can muster" in order to expose the fallacies, the inconsistencies, the invalidities, and the inaccuracies of the case it is hoped to demolish. Provocatively, Jay argues that the protest group should deliberately attempt to frustrate the local authority's case by insisting on severe detailing of intentions, their implications and particularly their costs in monetary terms. A particular cause of annoyance, Jay observes, is the demand for a specific written response to specific questions, thereby committing the respondent to matters to which he might have preferred to remain uncommitted. In the "diplomatic offensive" it is recommended that five objectives should be pursued: (a) to discover the likely success of the opposition, (b) to amass information, (c) to muster political support, (d) to avoid a situation where one side in the argument is the outright winner or loser, and (e) to add "ammunition" for the continued exchanges.

The purpose of Jay's entertaining insight into the politics of protest is to declare the minimum range of activities to be entertained in order to achieve a meaningful negotiated settlement of the contentious issue. Its radicalism may be surprising to many whose political persuasion might be more typically conservative; yet it is aimed at the recognized 'joiners', and even if not implemented in any manner similar to the proposition, its value may be in its revelation of the potential avenues of provocative participation available to those citizens anxious to become involved and its statement of the organizational and competence prerequisites to success.<sup>(40)</sup>

2. *Direct action.* Oppenheimer and Lakey (1964), drawing upon their experience of the Civil Rights movement in the United States, have produced what the author of the foreword to their book has described as "a much-needed practical training manual for non-vio-

<sup>(39)</sup> Jay (1972), p. 14.

<sup>(40)</sup> Jay's final comment is worthy of note: "And if you fail, you fail. And the final irony is that when the bulldozers move in and your community is destroyed, the campaign itself will have ensured that it has become a far more healthy, warm, living, unified community than it ever was before the plan was published." p. 24.

lent direct action", not in the form of an instant do-it-yourself handbook, but as a stimulus to the giving of rational thought to the tasks confronting the aspiring activist. In this, the manual represents a sophistication of the Jay broadsheet, a recommendation to resist emotive irrational offensives in favour of deliberately calculated negotiation by demonstration. It is the expressed intention of the authors that the manual should be interpreted as a contribution to the democratisation of the protest movements and to the injection of more responsibility into the roles of the participants. The manual begins with an examination of the community and identifies some of the leverage points which might contribute to the bringing about of desired change. It proceeds to pursue an educational role, recommending effective tactics and training programmes, and commenting upon the inevitable consequences of falling foul of the prevailing legal system and its rules. Whilst neither advocating nor advising the breaking of the law, Oppenheimer and Lakey concede that some tactics or strategies might inevitably result, technically, in an infringement of the law; however, it is pointed out that, in the United States at least, the right to participate in some direct action is in fact protected by the law.<sup>(41)</sup> One of the clues to the philosophy of Oppenheimer and Lakey may be identified in the close of their introduction: "There are places and times when law so abuses the inherent rights of people that the only way to make grievances known, and begin to create a more just situation, is to violate the law." Because of the tendency for most planning systems to be democratic, it is possibly rare that resort to law-breaking is necessary to bring about change.

The manual recommends a preliminary investigation to ascertain the location of effective power in the community, in order to be aware of the most vulnerable points at which to exert pressure, and in order to be assured of the likely sources of support and of opposi-

<sup>(41)</sup> Oppenheimer and Lakey have suggested that some of the violence that occurs and the legal proceedings that are subsequently instituted, occurs because of a misunderstanding of the spirit of the requisite law by the law enforcement agencies. Although it is exceptional for situations in urban and regional planning to reach such antagonistic proportions, some anti-freeway expressions and the Green Ban movement in Australia have brought about confrontations between the participants and the police.

tion. It proceeds to develop the hypothesis that not all situations require the same intensity of activist activity, but that on establishing the level of the organisation as the situation (of the dispute) emerges, it is recommended that the intensity is raised one degree.<sup>(42)</sup> The strategy to be pursued is likely to be determined by the political awareness of the group, its numerical strength, and the prevailing political environment, and may be expected to pass through four phases which, from the reaction of the opposition forces may be described as (1) indifference, (2) active antagonism, (3) disunity, and (4) negotiation. In order to achieve an outcome satisfactory to the promotional group, it is incumbent on the group to be politically astute, subject-competent, and capable of sustaining its effort over a prolonged period until the 'opposition' significantly changes its position on the issue.

A useful and accommodating chapter in the manual is addressed to those members of the community, anxious to secure satisfactory settlements of minority group claims, but who are reluctant to engage in direct action. The message, conveyed simply through a number of case studies, is that such people ally themselves to nationwide organisations committed to negotiated settlement rather than the conflict resolution processes commonly associated with the means of direct action. The manual describes the minimum desirable organisational traits for direct action groups, concerned with publicity, membership and recruitment, financing, and workshops for education through role-playing. These matters are as valid for any of the decision-making situations in the planning process as for any of the more directly confrontational episodes in the civil rights situation. Perhaps groups anxious to participate in planning would profit from the role-playing workshop exercises for the reasons cited by Oppenheimer and Lakey: (1) to develop and practice the skills dictated by the situation; (2) to understand the behaviour motivations of the opposition; (3) to develop personal confidence in handling the situation's developments; (4) to reduce the tensions likely to be built up through prolonged and intense differences between the parties to the situation; and (5) to extend the horizons of subject-competence throughout the group. In the catalogue of direct action tactics, reference

<sup>(42)</sup> Six degrees are nominated, from "friends in the cause" to "actively hostile" (p. 20).

is made to a Norwegian inventory of sixty-four different methods; however, the manual considers such strategies in three groups, those of demonstration, those of nonco-operation and those consisting of intervention and physical confrontation.

It is unusual for participation in urban and regional planning to partake of measures which seem appropriate to the moral crusading of the civil rights movement; however, there are lessons to be drawn from Oppenheimer and Lakey's manual, not the least of which is to be competent, be organised and know your enemy.<sup>(43)</sup>

3. *Planning and design workbook.* In a project, undertaken on behalf of the Department of Community Affairs, New Jersey, the Research Centre for Urban and Environmental Planning at Princeton University prepared a 592-page 'do-it-yourself' manual for planning by community groups. Its usefulness and the anticipated clientele for the handbook are described in the introductory paragraphs: the workbook has been designed "for people who want to take action to make a better life in their community and in their housing ... to help you decide what changes you would like to make ... also (to) help you to carry out the changes."<sup>(44)</sup> This manual is more constructive in terms of planning than the two previously considered, for it claims to be, and has the potential capability of being a source to enable groups wishing to positively participate in the planning process by preparing their own plans, to (a) state the preferred policies to achieve the desired ends, to (b) prepare specific proposals to support those policies, to (c) facilitate an agreeable working relationship with the city officials and other professionals with whom negotiations may be needed.<sup>(45)</sup> The handbook has been prepared in such a way that it claims the users do not need previous special training in order to make use of it profitably.

<sup>(43)</sup> A useful source for study of the theory of protest in politics is Lipsky, M. (1970), *Protest in City Politics*, Chicago, Rand McNally. A supporting source of preparatory study is Bruyn, S. T. (1963), *Communities in Action: Pattern and Process*, New Haven, College and Univ. Press. Both sources have useful bibliographic sections.

<sup>(44)</sup> Spring (1969), p. 6.

<sup>(45)</sup> The workbook 'emerged' following a number of in-field experiments with community groups in New Jersey, and built on the experiences of the Trenton Model Cities Agency.

The concept of the manual seems admirable; within two covers is a framework to facilitate an education programme for the users, both to inculcate an awareness of the planning environment and to develop some simple planning design and communication skills. It does not pretend to provide a comprehensive 'do-it-yourself' service; it is particularly directed to provide help in the process of making changes to the physical arrangement in the community, during which it is necessary to be aware of the implications in the quantity, type and location of structures and activities, and streets. The workbook is organised into four parts; the first, and the most general, contains instructions and information on the types of plans that may be prepared, the types of information required and the possible sources of that information, the procedures for selecting sites for development, the jargon peculiar to urban and regional planning, and completes the inventory with a catalogue of useful planning design manuals and texts. Part 2 is concerned with a description of the 'community activities planning method', which is a comprehensive methodology for educating the group and communicating the group's aspirations intelligently to those officials and other professionals which will need to secure the implementation of the group's or some other plan for the community. Its method of presentation is a segregation of information into three columns appropriate to (1) the action to be undertaken, (2) the 'materials' necessary to support the action, and (3) a graphic representation of those materials. The manual supports the description with the presentation of sample forms for the documentation, and with an explanation of the implications of certain responses to fifty-one suggested questions; and this Part concludes with sketch presentations of fifteen community development types. Parts 3 and 4 contain more detailed descriptions of the issues involved, the minimum technical desiderata, the planning of design processes, and the most likely effective means of communication, the first (Part 3) appropriate to site planning, and the second (Part 4) to the design of dwellings. In the considerations of site planning, thirty-six sample issues are isolated, and the implications of some alternative actions are described; user standards (of federal and state government) are identified; and the commentary concludes with a representative survey of built (housing) environments, with twenty-

seven sample physical alternative designs based upon five possible development forms, according to density, and to spatial organisation.

Each part of the workbook begins with a sequential series of instructions, is accompanied with sample forms for the collection of data and the dissemination of policy statements, and is complemented by a graphic catalogue of development examples, and an indication of the 'tools' that will assist the preparation of the plans, diagrams, models and sketches of the group's work. The manual purports to be innovative in that it describes procedures and techniques used by most built environment professions in a manner which renders them comprehensible to people lacking special training or education. In the introductory remarks, reference is made to the almost inescapable need for groups to enlist the support of competent professional architects, planners and engineers at some stage in the planning and design process; however, it is asserted that the use of the manual will enable the group to be more aware of the implications of its preferred participatory strategy, more satisfactorily communicate with the professional advisor, and to more efficiently evaluate the work done for it or on its behalf. The manual is composed in such a way as to make itself a useful educational tool.

These three sample self-help manuals are perhaps best conceived as complementary: the first two are particularly concerned with the issues of conflict resolution as a political act, so their concentration has been on developing an awareness of the political milieu of decision-making and on expressing some of the actions open to the lay protagonists. The Workbook is more constructive, especially in the context of urban and regional planning, because it demonstrates physical design solution options to particular physical planning situations, and it is therefore usable in both promotional and conflict political situations.

(b) *Planning Aid*

The debate on the concept of planning aid, and its operational expression has been exercising the thoughts and consciences of planners and planning administrators for a few years. Although it is being considered amongst the 'self-help' means of participation, it really

is a strange companion to the other techniques considered in this group. Most of the other techniques are promotional, constructive; planning aid, however, is essentially a response technique, but to accentuate its differences to other techniques, it is deliberately fashioned to meet the technical requirements of a disadvantaged and largely threatened clientele. This particularised clientele has been identified as "the poorer communities near city centres (which) are decimated by slum clearance, sliced in half by urban motorways, and rehoused on new estates. It is these communities which lack knowledge, resources, and political power. Unless they are given assistance, the effect of planning decisions can be highly regressive" (Amos, 1972). Other contributions to the debate on this matter are not so restricting in their client definition; Amos, in the same paper, suggests that the whole matter of planning aid is one aspect of a much larger debate concerning the distribution of resources, the inadequacies of representative democracy, citizen participation, citizen rights, and many other associated matters; Evans (1973) has commented that the availability of the service should be extended to all sections of the community irrespective of financial, political, racial, social or other constraints.

The concept of planning aid is fraught with many problems. The need for planning aid has come about largely because of exposed deficiencies in the current planning service in three critical areas—a need for information, for advice, and for technical support. These three needs have become more critical because of the evolution of planning systems which make available opportunities for citizen participation, yet which conspicuously fail to provide the necessary support services.

Many current planning aid activities are almost insistent that the client(s) develop a self-help capability; it is this which constitutes the main distinction between planning aid and advocacy planning. Planning aid agents interpret their function as educators and facilitators, providing a service to their clients by (a) providing *information* on the nature of the planning process, its procedures, the rights of the individual or group, the purpose of planning, the policies and proposals of the local planning authorities or agencies, (b) providing *advice* on how the rights available may be constructively and sensibly

exercised to achieve maximum advantage in terms of relationships with councillors, experts, other individuals and groups, and on the preparation of a tenable planning argument, (c) providing *technical expertise*, essentially to clients which may not have the financial resources to hire professional advisors in the conventional manner. Behind the concept of planning aid there is an interpretation that "having been provided with the tools, the group or individual concerned can benefit from a practical learning situation."<sup>(46)</sup> In the self-help situation, the planner educator-facilitator initially acts as a catalyst, in a voluntary capacity, either being called upon because of his reputation to provide the planning aid service, or committing himself because of his ideological sympathies. The planning aid situation may provide comprehensive benefits—to the individual or group previously lacking in information and competence, and to the planner in maximising his commitment to social improvement through environmental design.

The means of planning aid may include:

1. permanent local advice centres;
2. a network of expertise contacts;
3. consultant services;
4. volunteer (no-fee) services;<sup>(47)</sup>
5. planning school project work—"clinical advocacy";
6. planning lectures, workshops;
7. area-based local authority administration;
8. lay education in planning, through any media or education outlet;
9. the provision of a venue for meetings.

There is a fine line of division in some of these means between planning aid and advocacy. The essential question, however, is how the limited reservoir of planning expertise can be maximised to ensure that all types of planning action can be properly serviced, and particularly how planning aid can be made available where it

<sup>(46)</sup> RTPI (1974), p. 3.

<sup>(47)</sup> For this type of service there are potential conflicts of interest if the volunteer is engaged in the local or central government service, and there are potential contractual and professional problems devolving from the code of conduct of the professional institutes.



is most needed, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Case histories so far available for study (for example, the Planning Exchange (Glasgow);<sup>(48)</sup> the TCPA Planning Aid Service;<sup>(49)</sup> Community Planning Associates (Birmingham)<sup>(50)</sup>), only partially clarify the matters; they significantly raise further issues of a practical, administrative, financial and other resource nature, without providing many solutions. In the British situation, Evans (1973) has advocated the establishment of a national, salaried planning-aid service. The planning aid means identified in the previous paragraph would contribute to the response-to-events orientation of individuals or groups aggrieved by decisions taken or proposed; they are not presently suitably structured for promotional activities, for goal setting, or for a constructive contribution to plan evaluation, but the innovative nature of the planning aid would be conducive to the development of such a positive plan-making capability once the client group(s) had indulged in the necessary self-education process.

(c) *Task Forces*

The use of task forces to probe complex matters and to produce a report or series of recommendations for action is becoming a significant means of participation in decision-making, both generally and in respect of urban and regional planning. The task force usually adopts one of two forms, although these alternatives by no means exhaust the list of possible forms; firstly, the task force may take the form of the 'little city hall', which has become part of the decision-making process in Boston (Lawer, 1971), or the district planning organisation associated with the Charrette technique as in Baltimore. Secondly, the adopted form might be that of a trouble-shooting committee, promoted initially by the city authorities, but established prin-

<sup>(48)</sup> The Planning Exchange (Glasgow); established in 1973 to provide planning information, a venue for meetings, and planning advice.

<sup>(49)</sup> TCPA Planning Aid Service; established in 1973 to provide information, advice, advice in respect of preparing cases for public inquiries, to provide a network of willing specialist help to needy groups.

<sup>(50)</sup> Community Planning Associates (Birmingham); to provide information, advice, prepare reports, conduct surveys, prepare planning submissions or planning strategies for groups (see editions of *West Midland Grass Roots*, published by CPA, Lozells Social Development Centre, 1 Finch Road, Birmingham, B19 1HS).

cipally to devise a meaningful structure for grassroots activities; in some instances, such committees have been formed in particular districts in consequence of federal (United States) legislation. Attention in the following paragraphs is given to this second form of task force, of which there are three different expressions—the community development corporation, the neighbourhood improvement council, and the task force *per se*.

1. *Community development corporation.* These corporations are essentially community-based organisations which pursue selected revenue-generating strategies in order to enable the community to achieve their own expressions of their social, economic and physical development. The task force form is a peculiarly United States' phenomenon, with most of the established corporations functioning in low-income American-Indian or Mexican-American communities in both urban and rural locations; since the 1960's, an increasingly significant proportion of the corporations have been established in black urban ghettos.<sup>(51)</sup> There are common organisational features for the corporations, but the specific organisational form is determined largely by the competence of the participants, the nature of the district, and the essential purposes of the district's programme. Clark (1965) has richly described the typical social, economic and physical environments of the districts which resort to the CDC form for a means of solving its problems.

One of the first tasks of the CDC is to create an *esprit de corps* within the community, and particularly among the various identifiable interest groups. Upon this base it has been suggested that the succeeding most important tasks are to cultivate managerial efficiency within the district, gradually obviating the need for dependency on outside resources or benevolence (Sturdivant, 1971). In short, the aim is to create a community form closely resembling the co-operative. The goals of most CDCs are complex, but three recur in the programmes of most; these are (a) the development of a mechanism through which the poor might achieve meaningful participation in and control of significant aspects of community life;

<sup>(51)</sup> The U.S. Congress enacted Community Self-Determination legislation (1960) to extend the existence of the corporations.

(b) the gradual provision of social welfare from within the community, thereby dispensing with the 'handout syndrome' of public welfare; and (c) the promotion of the economic development of the community through selective investment (Anon, 1969). Despite the cardinal aspiration of the CDC to achieve widespread community participation, in practice, there has been a clear tendency for leaders to 'emerge' from the ranks of the citizenry, and for these to proceed to control and promote the general directions of development. This phenomenon is, perhaps, the inevitable consequence of the need to expedite conspicuous community improvement, even at the expense of the conventional democratic processes of informing, motivating and organising the community. This form of the task force seems admirably suited to districts exhibiting particular socio-economic and ethnic characteristics; it is similar, in many respects, to the recently introduced regional councils for social development under the Australian Assistance Plan.<sup>(52)</sup>

2. *Neighbourhood improvement councils.* These councils are essentially grass roots and community-wide organisations designed expressly to facilitate local participation in the solution of local problems. They differ from the CDCs previously discussed in that their role is essentially one of plan recommendation; the ultimate control is exercised by the appropriate city council because it is that level which controls the purse strings. The NICs are conspicuously useful for considering, and generating recommended strategies for the solution of problems concerned with a district's physical fabric and arrangement, and with its susceptibility to development or redevelopment pressures. This participatory form emerged as that most likely to reach the usually uncommitted and inactive sectors of the population, following a review of possible participation strategies by Tacoma city council (Tacoma, 1971). It was envisaged that these councils would be operated on a voluntary basis by local residents, with the composition of their 'executive' determined by the desirability of achieving an equitable representation of the different groups and interests within the district. The city council was to be used

<sup>(52)</sup> See, for example, *Establishing the Australian Assistance Plan in Brisbane*, Brisbane, Queensland Council of Social Service (1974).

as a source of advice, with its principal role being to co-ordinate the diverse recommendations from the NIC's.

Two procedures may be pursued to achieve the establishment of the council: either an invitation is extended generally for interested persons or groups to organise themselves into an efficient body, or the city authorities might contact the assumed neighbourhood leaders and extend an invitation to them to develop a neighbourhood organisation. In return for the generation and maintenance of grass roots interest in the functioning of government, the city council would be obliged to give an assurance to the neighbourhood councils that their reasonable and feasible recommendations would be given serious consideration. This process of planning from the bottom up could best be achieved by city councils' professional staff assuming responsibility for maintaining and promoting the activities and policies of particular neighbourhoods; such an organisational ploy would ensure both city hall and the neighbourhoods were informed of the proposals of the other. The neighbourhood improvement council scheme is based on the premise that comprehensive plans for neighbourhood development are better accepted and more liable to be implemented if the neighbourhood participates in their generation; the Tacoma scheme was to be supported by the introduction of a city council appointment, the Citizen Involvement Co-ordinator.

3. *Task forces.* One of the most 'open histories' of a task force is that of the organisation established in Portland (Oregon) to devise a meaningful district planning organisation (Portland, 1972). The description which follows identifies the output of the task force, and its recommendations for the district planning organisation (DPO).

A sixteen member task force was established by the city planning commission to devise a means of district planning which could redirect the force of citizen involvement from its prevalent preoccupation with opposition to a more contributory and positive task of creativity. Such a means would be expected to significantly contribute to the resolution of conflicts within the district, to the definition of the responsibility of the various possible participants to the planning process, to the development of socio-physical strategies which could reasonably become an integral part of the city's comprehensive

strategy, and to the establishment of a systematic method for the exchange of ideas and information between the city council and the district. The council-selected task force, representing a diversity of city-wide interests, and enjoying various competences, set its own working rules,<sup>(53)</sup> appointed a full-time salaried administrative staff of three persons, undertook a series of public and private meetings to elicit the views of the city's organised and from its generally unorganised citizenry, on the most mutually satisfactory form and content of a district planning organization. This form of task force differs considerably from the planning advisory committee which is appointed in some cities to comment *generally* on planning proposals or strategies. The Portland task force resembles the 'consultation' form adopted by the Australian Frontier to think through particular problems, or the task forces established by the Australian Institute of Urban Studies to investigate and report on identified issues within its purview.

The task force made seven recommendations which cumulatively set the guidelines for the organisation of planning at the district level. The recommended organisation of the DPO may be summarised as follows:

1. a forum for the exchange of ideas and information between citizens, groups, and between the DPO and the city council;
2. an executive to develop comprehensive social, economic and physical strategies from the exchanges in the forum, and to translate the proposals into a form which the city council could seriously consider for incorporation into the citywide strategy; to achieve this degree of finesse, the executive would be expected to forge

<sup>(53)</sup> Six guiding principles were set: that (1) the city already exhibited organisations and individuals capable of, and willing to deal responsibly and creatively with issues affecting the quality of life in the city; (2) the DPO structure should facilitate the responsible consideration of and planning for both the physical and the social development of the district; (3) the city should be administered on two levels—comprehensively city-wide, and in more detail at the district level; (4) in the two-tier system, the districts would most likely be determined by geographical or administrative factors, but within the districts, the separation into neighbourhoods should be determined by the residents; (5) the recommended structure should take maximum advantage of existing district definitions, and should be capable of easy absorption into future local government structures; (6) the DPO should be delegated reasonable decision-making powers (Portland, 1972).

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working relationships with city and other government departments;

3. an executive empowered to seek its own funding;
4. an operational structure developed to meet the special requirements of the district's populace, its problems and its internal competences to achieve solutions;
5. a city council administrative support base, both in terms of finance and personnel; the recommendation was that the DPO should be provided *as of right* with a competent community worker/organiser, appropriate stationery and mailing facilities, secretarial aid;
6. an executive recognised by the city council as the *de facto* planning organ in the district;
7. an open communication channel between the district and the city council.

The implementation of the autonomy provisions of the DPO would entail a reconsideration and restructuring of most conventional decision-making systems; the initiative of the DPO would be effectively stifled if they were not implemented.

The more innovative means, and those based on the self-determination of the local community are dependent upon certain, if unspecified, competences within the community, and a willingness and ability of the conventional decision-making organs of local government to accommodate the 'new' inputs.<sup>(54)</sup> In order for the less conventional means of plan consideration and generation to be effective, an improvement to general levels of educational attainment is a prerequisite. For further innovation, in addition to the educational prerequisite, there is a need for improvements to communication technology.

4. MEANS OF PARTICIPATION—  
IMPROVED COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The art of 'futurology' is being significantly directed by the application of scientific method and improved technology. One part of

<sup>(54)</sup> Circular 52/72, Department of the Environment (London: HMSO) effectively stifles the Skeffington initiative of the community forum, in the reported antipathy towards the idea from the existing formidable local government lobby.

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this improved technology, particularly in so far as it holds a potential for mass citizen involvement, is the development of an extended capability of mass communication facilities. Carey and Quirk (1970) have commented critically on the "increasingly prevalent and popular brand of the futurist ethos that identifies electrical power, electronics and cybernetics, with a new birth of community, decentralization, ecological balance and social harmony."<sup>(55)</sup> This area of futurology may be closely identified with McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller, Kahn and the Rand Corporation amongst many others. Within this area of research falls the MINERVA<sup>(56)</sup> project, supervised by Etzioni and Unger at the Center for Policy Research, New York. Although many proposals have been aired, there does not exist at the present time an effective means by which large and dispersed groups of people may regularly interact and commit themselves to a consensus which is usable in a political context; the present dilemma is that "dialogues in real-time are virtually impossible, and communication remains mostly unidirectional."<sup>(57)</sup> From this pedestrian pace and substantially less than democratic process flows an increasing alienation of the citizenry from political and social processes, decisions which are not too responsive to the real aspirations or preferences of the citizenry (thereby inducing opposition), and a diminished potential for mutual influence or genuine group consensus to emerge. The MINERVA project attempts to foster, through the adaptation of the potential of electronic communication technology, a system of mass social communication.

The potential for the use of the participation or involvement capability afforded by improved communication technology has been reviewed by Etzioni (1972), and Unger (1972).

Etzioni (1972) has described an optimal version of MINERVA as satisfying the following pre-requisites:

- (a) a capacity to reach (i.e. broadcast to) a mass public;
- (b) a 'live' group dialogue of a geographically dispersed mass public;

<sup>(55)</sup> Carey and Quick (1970), p. 220.

<sup>(56)</sup> MINERVA is derived from "Multiple Input Network for Evaluating Reactions, Votes and Attitudes."

<sup>(57)</sup> Leonard *et al.* (1971), p. 4.

- (c) a continuous 'live' feedback between the 'audience' and the 'broadcasters'—i.e. the free exchange of a successful public meeting;
- (d) the recording of participants' public responses and the reporting of the evolving position to the participants;
- (e) the interjection of expert information into the dialogue;
- (f) the establishment of rules to regulate the access to the system;
- (g) the capacity to provide opportunities for inter-group or inter-person dialogue.

None of the technologies presently available is able to accommodate all seven elements; however with variable combinations, and with adaptations, an embracing technology may be generated. In the optimal system, any citizen having access to a radio or a television set and to a telephone would be able to follow, react and participate in the discussion and resolution of public affairs. In this way "an electronic equivalent to town hall meetings is provided, allowing dispersed groups to act as if they were all in one central gathering place."<sup>(58)</sup> Despite its obvious failure to achieve the immediacy of a public meeting, the MINERVA system could usefully expand participation, by facilitating the involvement of people who either from choice or a combination of personal circumstances are usually not in attendance at public meetings; in addition, the system could accommodate the tentative participation of citizens initially interested enough in the issue under consideration to turn on their radio or television sets, but not sufficiently committed to attend meetings in person. Etzioni has hypothesised that the MINERVA system might facilitate a greater awareness on the part of citizens who consider their viewpoint is usually ignored because of the dialogue, or it might help citizens adjust their aspirations if they are revealed to be unrealistic.

In order to achieve some order out of the potential mass participation, the MINERVA system, and any system similar to it, would require a hierarchical network of decision-making forums. The 'communication tree', employing a diversity of technologies, affords a

<sup>(58)</sup> Etzioni (1972), p. 460.



four-level dialogue and response system:

- (1) for small groups (up to 30 persons), using automated telephone conferencing;
- (2) for small communities (300–2000 persons), using two-way cable television (where available);
- (3) for communities of a population 6 to 40,000, using a combination of radio, television, telephones;
- (4) for communities of 50,000 people or more, using networks linking the communication systems of lower-level communities, i.e. cable, microwaves, television relay stations, or satellites.

The 'communication tree' concept assumes the incorporation of lesser levels in the higher levels, and that as the tree is ascended, the mass participation input is stylised by the employment of delegates selected by participants at each particular level though not necessarily identical to the conventional elected representatives. In addition, the dialogue system would need to be 'tampered with' in order that the common stimuli of the public meeting could be incorporated.

The MINERVA system, to be efficient, would need to be subjected to the similar procedural rules as a conventional meeting, although, because of the diversity of levels at which the system may be used, continuous experimentation would be preferable in order that level-specific rules could be devised. Etzioni (1972), and Leonard *et al.* (1971) have described possible 'rules of access'.

Whilst still at an early stage of development,<sup>(59)</sup> there are indications that the MINERVA system, in association with social innovations, economic investment, improved responsiveness of government, higher levels of general education, and higher *per capita* incomes, could facilitate a mass participatory system, achieving a higher participant response rate than presently secured by conventional democratic means.<sup>(60)</sup> A variation on the technology theme has been posited by Sheridan (1971); he has advocated harnessing the capabilities of the digital computer to collect and, by means of a suitable

<sup>(59)</sup> Leonard *et al.* (1972), report on the preferred sequence of experimentation, pp. 6–11.

<sup>(60)</sup> The MINERVA project has given rise to a series of reports, available from the Center for Policy Research, New York.

display device reveal aggregate responses from groups of citizens—i.e. a “computerized referendum”.

As most advocates of the application of emerging technological systems concede, there is an inherent capacity in the use of machines for political manipulation; however, as Sheridan remarks, with the capacity of technology available it is possibly an abrogation of societal responsibility if the potential for participatory democracy is not at least explored by means of experimentation.

The means of participation, described and discussed in this chapter do not purport to be anything other than a representative sample of those available and in use at the present time or capable of adaptation for use either immediately or consequent upon a number of improvements to the educational status of the population and to communication technology. In fact, twenty-three means have been considered in the chapter, inclusive of a number of variations to the general technique. Detroit City Plan Commission listed fifty-four means, not all of which were starkly different (Detroit, 1968), some of which were treated to considerable pro-and-con discussions, others of which were simply cited as potentially useful techniques. Even that listing is not exhaustive.

The essential significance of the diversity of means is that even at the present state of knowledge, there would seem to be a sufficiency of techniques to facilitate a reasonable degree of participation by the citizenry in decision-making no matter what the subject area or its complexity. As Sheridan (1971) has urged in respect of communication technology, and as Oppenheim (1966) has advocated in respect of questionnaire surveys, it is undoubtedly necessary for pilot studies or experiments to be conducted to ‘de-bug’ the technique before it is publicly launched and used for specific participatory purposes. Such experimentation is necessary if for no other reason than to identify the impediments to successful implementation which may arise or be inherent in the decision-making system. It is to these impediments that attention is turned in Chapters 8 and 9.

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## PART FOUR

### *The Impediments to Participation*

In this part, the opportunity has been taken to reflect upon the matters considered previously with the intention of identifying those which seem likely to have the most significant impact on the processes of citizen participation. It has been suggested that the over-worked expression 'maximum feasible participation' has become a catalyst for a persistent and incomplete task; a number of commentators on participation in planning have enquired why planning seems to be treated in isolation when what would appear to be the more fundamental task is "the redefinition of the relationship between the citizen and his government in a democratic society founded upon individual rights and liberties".<sup>(1)</sup> Thus, it may be suggested that citizen participation in urban and regional planning should be seen as a part of a much wider spectrum of government activity in the social welfare field. It is the confused context or genesis of the participation movement in planning which has contributed to some of the dilemmas in which planning has become embroiled. Whilst, as a general notion, citizen participation in decision-making may be interpreted as a democratic right, the very multiplicity, diversity and complexity of government activity and responsibility is such that the notion needs circumscription by what is realistic. In addition, the increased specialisation and professionalisation of pursuits within the arena of government has tended towards an élitist rather than a pluralist form of decision-making. These, and many other similar philosophical and practical arguments are well aired in the literature of political science; some of those with a bearing on the issues of planning were considered in the first two chapters of this book. Two

<sup>(1)</sup> Cahn and Cahn (1971), p. 10.

further prefatory comments are pertinent to the discussion which follows: firstly, it has been observed that the processes of citizen participation have been forced upon reluctant government because of the prevailing tensions in society which demand that more extensive participatory forms become the norm, despite the lack of certainty whether the results are contributory to community stability or instability;<sup>(2)</sup> secondly, the limitations to the concept have been identified, in that it has been commented that the responsibility for preparing a plan is that of a local government agency, and that this task is demanding of the highest standards of professional competence and ought, therefore, to be undertaken only by those with the requisite skills.<sup>(3)</sup>

These comments set the evaluation context of Part 4: how feasible is citizen participation in planning? The process of evaluation has been divided into two parts. In Chapter 8 consideration is given to the impediments to meaningful participation. The achievements of citizen participation in urban and regional planning are severely impeded by the characteristics of the planning process, of the participants, and of the subject matters of planning. Underlying many case studies of participation is the suspicion that the obligation to indulge in practices of citizen participation has been imposed on planning systems, the planners, the politicians, and the public *before* the advocates of the strategy, and the potential participants have become sufficiently aware of the complex methodological, philosophical and practical problems involved, i.e. *aware* of them, not necessarily capable of overcoming them. A particular dimension of these problems is taken further in Chapter 9; in this chapter consideration is given to some of the impediments to participation which are caused by the obligation to participate. Brief consideration is made of the problems of the costs of participation exercises, the lengthened time-scale of the decision process, the special competence required of planning staff, and the impact on the efficiency of the decision process.

Part 4, generally, reflects upon some of the vital lessons to be learned from the largely theoretical discourse of the book, and upon the need to carefully translate the theory into the particular political

<sup>(2)</sup> Mann (1970), p. 182.

<sup>(3)</sup> Skeffington (1969), para. 5(a).



contexts in which citizen participation is a requirement in the decision-making process. A brief concluding chapter comments on the careful consideration which is necessary before there is a commitment to citizen participation in planning.

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## CHAPTER 8

### The Impediments to Participation

The impediments to participation are diverse, and interconnected. It is probably impossible to accurately list all the methodological, philosophical and operational impediments, but the inventory is certainly more extensive than the principal frustration implicit in Arnstein's (1969) assessment of the situation, i.e. the maldistribution of decision-making power. This remark is not intended to detract from Arnstein's view that there is a "critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process."<sup>(1)</sup> However, the inventory is extensive, and it may help to appreciate the range of impediments if they are considered and distributed between four groups; (a) those concerned with the system of decision-making, plan-making and the system of planning; (b) those concerned with the techniques and facilities for participation; (c) those concerned with the participants; and (d) those concerned with the subject matter of planning.

#### DECISION-MAKING

It has been suggested that the more comprehensive the intention of the plan, the greater the dependence on the performance of other decision areas, and the more subtle the relationships between economic, social, political, and physical phenomena and 'systems' (Friend *et al.*, 1974); further, research is continuing into the inter-connectedness of matters in the planning process, revealing on occasions the vast scope of decision-making in planning. In the prevailing context

<sup>(1)</sup> Arnstein (1969), p. 216.

of rapidly changing technology and material standards of living, the established structures, both buildings and spaces, can quickly become obsolescent in respect of their original uses; the combination of functional obsolescence, and physical obsolescence or deterioration, present those responsible for making the decisions in planning with the challenge of selecting the most appropriate forms of response. With the present state of sensitivity in the community, the 'decision area' will be almost certainly invaded by aspiring participants unaware of the intricacies of the decision-making process, quite apart from the complexity of the subject matter. It is the intricacies and niceties of conventional decision-making which frustrate those especially concerned with the politics of protest and the immediate implementation of change to the decision process. Decision-making will perhaps always be an unfathomed mystery; its vagaries certainly defy most lay attempts at comprehension, and even the political scientists pursue different routes towards an understanding of decision theory, from "simple narratives to remarkably elegant mathematic constructs—complete with deductive models" (Hofferbert, 1974).<sup>(2)</sup> The essential dilemma is derived from the form in which decisions are called for; the decision situations rarely offer precise, clear options with objective proofs, because most of the components of the decision are susceptible to change and manipulation, and because both the human components and the human decision-makers are fickle and often liable to inexplicable actions or inaction. Even the preparation of a budget is incapable of precise ordering because of the fragmented, partially incremental and sensitive manoeuvring which is politically necessary to achieve an end-product at all (Wildavsky, 1964). Hofferbert has questioned the validity of the concept of the decision, suggesting that, as in planning, it is more appropriate to conceive of a decision process.

Catanese and Steiss (1970) have translated the complex cybernetic model of decision-making into a simple four stage model, involving (1) the identification of the problem; (2) the determination of the available courses of action to change the situation; (3) the identifica-

<sup>(2)</sup> This last comment is a reference to Raiffa (1968), *Decision Analysis: Introduction to Making Choices under Uncertainty*, Reading (Mass.), Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

tion of the most effective solution; (4) the determination of additional resources needed to improve the degree of effectiveness of the solution. The DOE (1971) management network in contrast, meanders through 107 steps to achieve a similar result. It is this source of frustration which has been identified by Eversley (1973); he has described the gap which has emerged (because of the invasion of plan-making by the new quasi-scientific techniques) "between the new technicians and the average planner, the gap between the most 'advanced' planners and their political masters, and worst of all, the gap between the profession as a whole and the community whom they are supposed to serve."<sup>(3)</sup>

Not only is the decision-making system difficult to appreciate, but the situations in which some participation is called for are not always conducive to such open deliberation. The statutory position in Britain is that participation is to be conducted at the plan-making stages; there is a notable exclusion (by omission) of the requirement to the routine functioning of development control. Heap (1973) has raised a doubt on the validity of citizen participation in situations he foresees as 'town planning control by the angry neighbour.' He cites evidence of situations in which the public are invited to express opinions about particular applications for planning permission, with revelations in public of details and concept models. This, for Heap, is not the area of decision-making in which the public should expect to participate as of right, particularly as the duty of the local planning authority is to determine the application on planning criteria alone, and not under the influence of observations from citizens, observations which might be personally-oriented and of little consequence to the planning merits or demerits of the planning application. The opportunity afforded to the citizenry for comment, or objection, where and when it occurs, should be extended to the applicant or the appellant, so that there is a facility for meeting or rebutting the points made by the citizens. This extension of the pre-decision dialogue between interested parties would inevitably prolong the decision-making process. In partial conflict with Heap's view is that of Bingham (1973), who comments upon the illogicality of the statu-

<sup>(3)</sup> Eversley (1973), p. 125.

tory requirement to publicise an appeal against a planning refusal but the absence of such a unilateral requirement in respect of the initial application; this renders unequal the opportunities for citizen participation. In its published reaction to the Skeffington Report, the RTPI (1970) cautioned against the too liberal interpretation of early publicity of planning applications, so that the inevitability of the 'blight' syndrome could be minimised. For its own proposed schemes, the RTPI recommended that the local planning authorities conduct their own survey and analysis in order to attain a balanced viewpoint *before* publicity occurs. Despite the interpretation of finality to which such a plan-making process might contribute, the procedure should be capable of flexibility and of accommodating change as a result of extended public scrutiny and observation.

Once an open consultation procedure is adopted for planning purposes, 'planning blight' is an inevitable consequence; there needs to be particularly sensitive and sensible compensation or betterment provisions in the planning and associated legislation to cope with the prejudicial impact of citizen participation.

In Chapter 2, considerable attention was given to the key concept of 'representation'. It is pertinent to briefly reconsider the matter at this point. Inevitably, the conventional decision processes will not always accurately pitch the level of responsibility in planning matters. This is a legacy of a decision process largely dictated by statutory provisions, and rooted in societal conditions prevailing several decades ago; the recent concessions to decision-making in certain issues by planners instead of the traditional planning committee forum is indicative of the realisation that the level of responsibility and the appropriate level for decision-making is variable. McLoughlin (1973) has implicitly made this point in describing the casework dimension of development control. The essential difficulty in the representation issue, is the appropriateness of the form *vis-à-vis* the planning matter. Heap (1973) has insisted that, despite its patent inadequacies, the traditional form of representative government is likely to be more objective and capable of developing a comprehensive viewpoint than any presently operational technique of citizen participation. There is a dilemma in this situation, because presumably the local populace is of the opinion that it knows what is in

its best interests, but that the optimisation of the means of achieving those interests might be prejudicial to the interests of the larger community. The responsibility for the larger interest must lie with the elected representatives; the delegation downwards is the critical and as yet inadequately defined process. 'Representation', and 'representativeness' are likely to be amongst the key bogeys in citizen participation for many decades.

A further political dimension of the representation issue, is that of the source and consistency of the planning mandate. The extension of citizen participation practices raise doubts about the ability of the responsible decision-making body to maintain a planning equilibrium, particularly if such a body considers its authority is being prejudiced, or if it is required to arbitrate between or co-ordinate diverse and sometimes irreconcilable submissions from constituent planning districts.<sup>(4)</sup>

#### MEANS OF PARTICIPATION

Despite the obvious need to develop participation practices which are culturally, situationally and locationally peculiar, there is a latent tendency for planning agencies, when confronted with pressure or a statutory obligation to promote a dialogue with the public, to turn to the largest laboratory of experimentation and use for a suitable technique—the United States. However, it is necessary for the implementing agency to recognise that mere importation of concepts and practices is unlikely to prove an easy or even a successful solution to their participation problems; the introduction of American practices would be significantly assisted if it was to be accompanied by the necessary cultural translation. For example, in respect of Britain and the United States, there are similar problems of continuing development and renewal pressures, and of popular dissatisfaction with the traditional channels of communication in the planning process, but there are considerable differences in their respective statutory bases of planning, attitudes to social welfare, and their attitudes

<sup>(4)</sup> It is to avoid this situation that the Charrette and certain task force organisations are designed to accommodate, as integral participants, representative politicians and public officials.

to and practice of government. Before any planning agency in Britain charged with planning responsibilities seeks to adopt apparently successful American participation practices, it would be wise to thoroughly investigate the prevailing circumstances in both situations; and it should be recognised that there is neither a common standard of commitment to, nor performance of, the various possible participation strategies throughout the United States (Altshuler, 1965; Fagence, 1973; Foley, 1960; Warner, 1968).<sup>(5)</sup>

Possibly because of the vast attention given to participation practices both in North America<sup>(6)</sup> and in Britain, and their earlier promotion in the former, most discussions concentrate upon the philosophy and practice from these two sources. However, there is not necessarily solely a one-way flow of experience and lessons, and the promotion of participatory democracy is by no means reserved to these two areas. It is because of this that each participation 'event' should be considered separately, and a purposely designed technique applied, drawing upon the rapidly increasing volume of worldwide experience, but not necessarily aping any of it unless the inter-related set of circumstances are coincident.

The means for meaningful participation may be impeded by a number of conceptual or practical problems; for example, (1) the essence of representative democracy may be threatened or even prejudiced by the introduction into the decision-making process of a less institutionalised mode of local representation; (2) the techniques presently available may not (in fact do not) accommodate the variable pitch of lay inputs into the decision-making process;<sup>(7)</sup> (3) the strategies and practices, once commenced, need to be capable of sustaining the interest and involvement of the participants (Burke, 1969), and to do this they need to be capable of achieving measurable success;

<sup>(5)</sup> It is necessary to be aware that there is a great diversity of local circumstances in American local government, and that some are not so different from the conditions prevailing in Britain as might be generally assumed.

<sup>(6)</sup> The expression 'North America' has been used deliberately, to recognise the important contributions to the development of the philosophy of, and techniques in, participation from both the U.S.A. and Canada.

<sup>(7)</sup> Fagence (1975) has advocated the use of the 'quality of life' concept as at least a philosophical basis upon which to formulate goals which are comprehensible to the public and capable of sophistication for use in the planning process by planners.

(4) the differential types of decision situation and level of planning naturally extend the scope of necessary participatory techniques, but, as Rein (1969) has commented "involvement, although it facilitates legitimation, impedes innovation,"<sup>(8)</sup> (5) the sections of society it is most desirable to involve, the persistent non-joiners, seem to resist the most overt overtures, although some case studies report measurable success in this problem area; (6) the technology, and more simply the existence of an adequate forum for the various types of gathering considered necessary in programmes of participation, is frequently unavailable. There are other serious impedimenta to the prosecution of meaningful participation practices, but these six are indicative of the magnitude of the problem.

In an attempt to overcome some of these problems, planning agencies frequently indulge in a superficial examination of the present state of the participation art, but their subsequent actions are dictated largely by the prevailing decision-making process and by the psychological composition of either the principal planner, or the politicians (Rabinovitz, 1968). As a basis for a summary consideration, lessons from United States experience may be cited. Four types of approach to the problems of overcoming impediments to introduction of participation techniques may be discerned: these may be described as (a) abbreviated, (b) cautious, (c) ebullient, and (d) structured (Fagence, 1973). The abbreviated form is in operation in those cities in which the power to make decisions is jealously guarded by the elected city council, its nominated commissioners and appointed officials. In such a situation the citizenry has no delegated responsibility or opportunity for contributing in any meaningful way to the planning process other than the conventional use of the vote and the ballot box. Cities operating this form of participation have no specific local ordinances or administrative procedures designed to cope with constructive lay input; this might or might not have been a deliberate omission. For example, Omaha (Nebraska) claims to have come full circle on the use of a system of citizen committees, principally because the attendance and productivity levels were so poor in those committees; as recompense, the city generates *ad hoc* committees as the need arises,

<sup>(8)</sup> Rein (1969), p. 238.



and the membership is generally composed of those members of the previous committee system who had demonstrated their interest and commitment. There might be currency in the suspicion that participation abbreviated to conventional representative government and the holding of public hearings is evidence of the inferior competence level of the planning agency and its commissioners. The cautious approach to citizen participation is manifest in those planning authorities intent on investigating the rational and practical implications of the 'innovation' before embarking upon programmes of their own. Reference was made in Chapter 7 to the investigations conducted by the North Eastern Illinois Planning Commission, and the cities of Detroit, Portland and Tacoma in preparation for their own proposed programmes. It is sufficient here to observe that from such cautious and initially conservative examinations have emerged well founded, rational and occasionally innovative participation strategies. A particularly intriguing approach to citizen participation was adopted by Los Angeles in connection with its Goals Program in the late 1960's. The Program's intention was to involve the more than two million cosmopolitan population of the 'inner' belt of Greater Los Angeles, its professional and advocacy planners, local and political leaders in the generation of a development strategy. In a preparatory exercise, similar to that undertaken in the cautious programmes, it became apparent that no participation programme of a similar size to that envisaged for Los Angeles had been previously undertaken anywhere in the United States. The impetus to what may be best described as an ebullient programme of participation *par excellence* was the appointment of Calvin Hamilton as the Director of City Planning; under his direction, and in response to particular local political disturbances (for example, the Watts district riots in the summer of 1965), the programme was built to include district and subject conferences, 'happenings', local information centres ('Centers for choice'), a corps of 'viewpointers', and Banner Day (18th June, 1967; a carnival style commencement of the participation phase). Despite the ebullience of the programme, the enthusiasm of its director and his staff, some of the techniques used (e.g. the bulk-mail questionnaire, the 'centers for choice') failed to achieve their expected mark on the programme, and the usually reticent

participants persisted in their attitudes, except that they were substantially caught up in the occasion of the Banner Day parade. Finally, the structured form, in its endeavours to overcome some of the methodological problems and impediments, and in spite of its patent commitment to innovation, introduces further operational constraints, either in the changes required in the traditional decision-making system of local government to accommodate locally generated and responsible plan proposals, or in the required degree of professional competence or intellect.

The means described in Chapter 7, whilst possibly contributing to various degrees to the balanced partnership in plan-making of which the Model Cities and Workable Programs insist, they are incidentally contributing to the already considerable inventory of impediments to citizen participation by their own conceptual, philosophical, or operational pre-requisites.

Stringer and Taylor (1972) have addressed themselves to a particular dimension of the problem. They have remarked that the publicity of plans required under British planning legislation might fail to achieve its desired purpose if the method chosen to present the information is not sufficiently communicative to the potential participants. In their examination of the information presentation methods advocated in the post-1968 British planning system they have analysed the plan techniques and notations recommended in the Development Plans manual (DOE, 1970). Criticism of the 'new-style' plans, in respect of their potential communication to potential citizen participants in the planning process may be summarised as follows: (a) the plans are unnecessarily complicated by the coincident intentions of communicating planning information and textual references; (b) the key diagrams lack visual excitement, and the resort to a too restricted range of colours or tones contributes to the possibility of misinterpretation; (c) the designatory letters of some land use categories are not the most obvious to the layman (for example, 'B' for 'office'). More fundamentally, Stringer and Taylor commented on the Manual's lack of a general definition of cartographic rules and standards. In order to gain more information on the matter of how people perceive and interpret maps they conducted a live experiment in connection with a proposal to redevelop a London

suburban shopping centre, in which a random sample of women were asked to respond to a set of plans drawn differently to communicate the same information. One of the important conclusions drawn from the exercise was that people are very adaptable, and are able to use maps and keys which are moderately complex given time to assimilate the information available. "The quicker the key can be learnt and used, and the more generally appealing a map is, the more successful will be the information transfer."<sup>(9)</sup>

From a study of the techniques of participation currently in use, or advocated, and of the facilities to support them, it should be clear that these are areas of citizen participation necessitating considerable research effort and operational commitment if the purposes of further democratisation of the planning process are to be achieved to any meaningful and measurable degree.

#### THE PARTICIPANTS

A substantial proportion of this book has been devoted to a consideration of the participants in the planning process, their attitudes, competences, motivations and decision-making capacities, so it is not necessary to extensively repeat the general findings at this point in the study. However it will be pertinent to briefly reiterate some of the general conclusions previously reached, and to consider in a little more detail the matters of apathy and alienation.

To a significant degree the successful collaboration of a diversity of participants in planning will be determined by their respective education levels; this is probably true, not only for those which will seek to be actively involved in decision-making but also for those which will persist in their state of acquiescence and non-involvement. Eversley (1973) has remarked that the presently cited reason for the failure of citizen participation is often the inability of the aspiring participants to satisfactorily understand the current state of planning theory and practice; however, he asserts that this allegation is not valid in respect of many well-organised and advised interest groups, community-conscious laymen, and many politicians. In fact, Eversley

<sup>(9)</sup>Stringer and Taylor (1972), p. 408.

is of the opinion that personal education, and educational stimulation by the media may significantly reduce the competence disparity between the planners and the planned.

Throughout this study, there has been a deliberate attempt not to overemphasise the education-disparity theme, because there is patently more to participation than intellectual calibre or, more specifically, particular planning skill. For example, at the commencement of Chapter 4, three guidelines were nominated which together set a measurement of meaningful participation; these guidelines were (a) the ability of the participants to effectively co-operate (Calhoun, 1971); (b) their ability to sustain their own interest through a prolonged planning process with its multiplicity of temporal, technical and political frustrations (Edelman, 1964); and (c) their ability to develop, mobilise and then sustain a volume of 'outside' support throughout the process (Rourke, 1969). These guidelines suggest that the prosecution of an artful political campaign is of at least equal significance to the need for general levels of 'high' educational attainment. This attitude would seem to be supported by Hill (1974) who has emphasised both the importance and the demands upon the potential participants of decision-making at the local level of government. In contrast, Dahl (1961) has predicated that at that level the likelihood of conflict and the development of a consensus was poor because of the differential distribution of the intellectual, social and economic capacities among the population. He opined that the natural diversity of competence and motivation in the population seriously frustrated the equilibrium decision-making expectations of democracy.

Most of the fundamental changes which have occurred in society, and which have been manifest in technological advances during recent decades have sustained an impact on planning and planners which has progressively demanded a revision of the methodology and philosophy of and for planning, and have rendered imperative a significant change in the planning education process; Eversley has suggested that "above all, they require entirely new attitudes of mind",<sup>(10)</sup> but has cautioned that this should not be interpreted as committing planning, the planners and the public to a *carte blanche*

<sup>(10)</sup> Eversley (1973), p. 87.

introduction of 'the new planning science', particularly as such techniques can only support decision-making and can or should never be a substitute for judgement. Quite distinct from the potential afforded to all participants by the availability of sophisticated devices and methods, successful intervention and co-operation in planning is dependent upon the operation of particular psychological skills. Reference was made in Chapter 4 in the discussion on the location and sources of power or influence, to the impact of personal charisma, of leadership. To a significant degree, the Civil Rights movement, the Nuclear Disarmament movements, and others generated by particularly emotive societal issues, have been sustained, or have lapsed because of the motivation and participation of identifiable leaders. Tedeschi and Bonoma (1972) have distinguished between the power attributes of individuals to control or manipulate issues or circumstances, and it may well be characteristics such as these, rather than the more easily definable requirement of educational attainment which represent the serious determinants of participation. Certainly, Rabinovitz's (1968) examination of city politics and planning supports this contention. In addition, the consensus-making capabilities of participants, whether as individuals or in groups of various kinds, are susceptible to fluctuation and dependent upon a diversity of interpersonal relationships, and perhaps the final determinant or impediment is the willingness of politicians, public officials and the public to become involved in participation practices, and their capacities to do so.<sup>(11)</sup>

The matters briefly referred to in the preceding paragraphs are well documented in the literature of political science and social psychology; and they are progressively occupying the attention of planners in planning literature. One matter which has been, and continues to be the source of concern as a phenomenon in democratic governmental systems is that of apathy. Although not strictly a characteristic of the participants, it is a feature of the mass public reaction

<sup>(11)</sup> "The real key to effective citizen participation is the willingness on the part of both technicians and policy makers to really have citizens participating.... The techniques without this willingness can become merely subterfuge." Avent, Keynote speech, National Conference on Innovative Strategies for Effective Citizen Participation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, March 26, 1972.

to the opportunities for participation, and it is a distinctive impediment to the achievement of full and meaningful participation; thus, it qualifies for consideration at this point in the study rather than at any other.

*Apathy—non-participation.* The most common decision-making practice at the local level is of elected representatives acting in accordance with a popular mandate, and with their anticipation of the electorates' expectations, supported by advice from the public officials, and susceptible to minority demands if it is politically expedient; this conforms to the conventional model of the dispersion of power. However, the problem of coping with that section of the public which does not participate has not yet been solved. From current practice, it seems that the mass of the citizenry to be affected by planning proposals in the pre-crystallisation phase of plan-making, have little intention to participate in the formulation of decisions (Stringer and Ewans, 1974). But, as Batley (1972) has observed, the citizen's acquired statutory right to information and consultation is of little meaning if he doubts that his involvement will have little impact on planning, and if the local authority doubts it has much, if anything, to gain from listening to his views. Then, to further complicate the problem, it has been argued by some elitist theorists, that it is irresponsible to provoke the non-participants to act because they are manifestly exercising their democratic right to abstain from involvement.

There is widespread apathy amongst the citizenry towards the operations of government at all levels, and towards the manoeuvring of the politicians, interest groups and lobbies. This situation has been deplored on many occasions; Berelson (1952) has gone furthest in his expressions of distaste of political apathy commenting that "political disinterest or apathy is not permitted, or at least, not approved",<sup>(12)</sup> whilst other theorists have maintained the contrary view that non-participation is indicative of a basically stable and contented society. The reasons for the failure of many citizens to actively express themselves politically are complex and inter-related, and many studies have attempted to explain why some people partici-

<sup>(12)</sup> Berelson (1952), p. 316.

pate in decision-making while others refrain. For example, Lane (1959), using Woodward and Roper's (1950) premise that political participation increases with increasing 'status' has considered eleven of the most significant arguments which lend credence to that premise;<sup>(13)</sup> in summary these arguments make reference to the availability of the time and energy to undertake the additional responsibilities, the degree of participant economic security, the expectation of success, the vested personal interest in decision outcomes (for example, the ownership of property), the inherent characteristics of self-confidence,<sup>(14)</sup> the adolescent 'training' in self and community responsibility, the political norms related to socio-economic status,<sup>(15)</sup> the electorate's expectations, supported by advice from the public of cross pressures (for example, conflicts of loyalty, differential distribution of information), the membership levels of identifiable organisations or groups,<sup>(16)</sup> the skills and aptitudes required in participation activities, and the degree of identification with the issue under discussion or with other participants involved. In summary, Lane tends to support de Tocqueville's assertion that the act of participation bonds the individual to society, whereas the withdrawal or denial of support—"political reserve"—potentially puts at risk the performance of democratic society.

Rosenberg (1954) has identified three groups of factors which contribute to political indifference and inactivity; these are (a) a reticence to indulge in political activity because of personal inadequacies, whether real or imagined; (b) the sense of futility of possible action because of the scant likelihood of achieving the desired political results; and (c) the absence of 'received' stimuli to action. The whole matter of non-participation is extremely complex; in addition to the arguments which may be presented to the possible indictment that non-involvement constitutes a 'travesty on democracy',<sup>(17)</sup> and to the

<sup>(13)</sup> Lane (1959), pp. 223-34.

<sup>(14)</sup> On this matter of self-confidence and expectation of effectiveness see Knupfer (1947), *Portrait of the Underdog*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. II, pp. 103-4.

<sup>(15)</sup> Berelson *et al.* (1954).

<sup>(16)</sup> This matter is subject to distortion because of the obligatory membership of trade unions.

<sup>(17)</sup> Comment passed during the debate on the introduction of compulsory voting to Australia, 1924.

tenable argument that each individual has the right to use or not to use opportunities for political involvement, it has been argued that non-participation is, in fact, a virtue (Jones, 1953). This latter thesis is based on the premises that the willing accommodation of non-expressions and of no involvement is a testimony to the strength of the liberal democratic tradition, and that the apathetic segment of the public constitutes a potentially effective conservative counterweight to the radical and sometimes fanatical elements of society. It is to be hoped that the motivations or causes of apathy, non-involvement and anomie,<sup>(18)</sup> deduced principally from electoral situations, are of similar relevance to such governmental and social welfare activities as urban and regional planning, because there is a significant dearth of deep probe studies of the non-participation phenomenon in planning. The matter is rendered more complicated by the diversity of situations in which apathy may be detected. Despite the paucity of information peculiar to planning, two recent planning-focussed studies contribute a measure of the relevance of the apathy phenomenon to planning; these studies are concerned with an urban renewal programme (Dennis, 1970) and with the development of district plans (Batley, 1972).

Dennis's analysis of an urban renewal programme in Sunderland revealed a miscalculation of the slum-family stereotype by the planners, and a remarkable reluctance by those to be affected by the slum clearance schemes to make use of their local councillors or the constituency Members of Parliament to express their sentiments. This patent disregard for the conventional channels of political communication is of concern if the stereotype interpretation is manifestly inaccurate: in fact, resort to the stereotype should be the planner's last ploy, but in the absence of a deliberate contact between the consumers and the producers of planning services there is possibly no other alternative open to the planners. Dennis has described the

<sup>(18)</sup> 'Anomie' was defined and distinguished by Durkheim in his study of suicide (Durkheim, 1951, *Suicide, a Study in Sociology*, Free Press, Glencoe, pp. 246-54). The concept refers to a state of personal 'social disintegration' in which the individual finds his sense of values seriously disrupted; this state causes serious inhibitions towards political participation, based on senses of ineffectiveness, irrelevancy to the considerations of those in authority, of lack of urgency and commitment. The anomic is prone to deviant political behaviour.



response of thirty-six observations to an exhibition where the invitation to make comments was made in a district of 20,000 people. He has cited many of the traditional 'reasons' for the low level of response from a community of low socio-economic levels, including the tendency for blue-collar working communities to react passively to government action in any area other than the economic.<sup>(19)</sup> A particularly significant disincentive to participate identified by Dennis is the length of the planning process, and the almost inevitable elapse of considerable time between the proclamation of a clearance, development or redevelopment programme and its impact upon the residents or land owners;<sup>(20)</sup> in addition, further de-personalised disincentives might be the magnitude of the change to be wrought by the clearance and redevelopment, the inevitability of disruption in the area after its designation as a slum, and the not infrequent ambivalent and disinterested attitude of the planners 'at the desk' towards the plight of those to be vitally affected by the redevelopment programme. Dennis's observations on the non-participation of certain societal groups are that "by their propensity for political passivity the poor and the uneducated disfranchise themselves",<sup>(21)</sup> that they fail to assure themselves of social justice, and they deny the ultimate decision-makers essential information and feedback.

Batley's study of two areas affected by planning proposals in Newcastle upon Tyne, is directly concerned with the establishment of the significance of residence on the opportunities available to contribute to decision-making, and the propensity to become actively concerned and involved. The research methods used were the conduct of a sample (questionnaire) survey of residents, participant observation in local organisations and events, and semi-structured interviews with councillors, officers and local leaders. It would appear that the first experiment in citizen participation, with the residents of a district previously considered to be 'ideally suited' for co-operative decision-making generated so many traumas for the councillors and the

<sup>(19)</sup> The 'Green Ban Movement' of the Australian Trade Unions (Camina, 1975), and the activities of the union movement generally seem to invalidate this supposition.

<sup>(20)</sup> In this regard Dennis has suggested the description 'slum clearance' becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (Dennis, 1970, p. 351).

<sup>(21)</sup> Dahl (1956), p. 81, cited in Dennis (1970), p. 354.

officers that the planning authority became very reserved about the extension of the experiment, particularly to less 'ideally suited' districts. There are grounds for suspecting that the City Council approached its exercise of citizen participation in the more affluent district (Jesmond) differently to that for the working-class dockside area (Byker). This difference in approach, in addition to the differences associated with the socio-economic status of the residents, may have contributed to the respective contributions in the two districts. Batley has remarked on the little contact between planning authority officials (and councillors) and the Byker public; "For most people, their only contact with the Council was through the visit of the public health inspector prior to the declaration of the compulsory purchase order and the visit of the housing inspector, just before rehousing."<sup>(22)</sup> This may have been contributed to by the dominance of two individuals—the leader of the ruling group and the city planning officer; the power and aura emanating from these two subjecting other council members and most other officials by "a sort of hypnotic persuasiveness." Davies (1972) has also made reference to the charisma of these same actors. Such élitism (or perhaps it is authoritarianism), is significantly contributory to the alienation of sympathy and participation of those it is presumably the intention to attract and use. Part of this attribution of decision-making is the insistence that someone has ultimately to make the decision; those with the necessary arrogance assume that responsibility, those without retire into an attitude of disinterest. Batley reports the awareness by some officials of the danger attendant in the making of rash promises; any failure to attain the objectives set in a moment of euphoria, or even under pressure of opinion, is conducive only to a strengthening of the view that government is not able, and perhaps has never intended to honour its undertakings.

The Newcastle study is particularly disturbing, because the city had been in the vanguard of experimentation with and the propaganda for meaningful practices of citizen participation, even in advance of the coming into effect of the 1968 statute obligating local planning authorities in Britain to formulate their plans in a more

<sup>(22)</sup> Batley (1972), p. 106.

participatory manner. Batley's interpretation of the essential disincentives for public involvement seems to point to the disinclination of the planners and the other relevant officials to yield any of their decision-making powers and responsibilities; having received unexpectedly severe treatment from residents in one area of the city, the officials seem to have become prejudiced against any public intervention in the plan-making process. Dennis and Davies report similarly. In the preliminary 'in-office' determinations of the most appropriate decision-making process, value-judgements have often been made about the likely level of involvement of the public—not always based on an understanding of the motivations of participation or non-participation—and it is this prejudicial position that has contributed to the manifestation of the attitudes expected. Almond and Verba (1963) refer to the myth of the democratic culture, and to the roles the participants expect each other to play; in both the Newcastle and the Sunderland studies, the citizenry seems to have faithfully acted the role of the lethargic and disinterested participant, and the decision-making forum within the local planning authority seems to have played its part to cultivate that level of inaction and disinterest that has enabled it to proceed in accordance with its own political prejudices and preferences.

In an investigation to isolate some of the psycho-social factors which might account for variation in attitudes and political behaviour, McDill and Ridley (1962) concluded that, quite separately from the impact of each independent factor, there was an accumulated impact. For urban and regional planning there are already a diversity of problems to be overcome before participation can be both meaningful and usable, and, perhaps because of its complexity and the lack of competence of most planners in this peculiar dimension of the total participation problem, it is unlikely that the matter of apathy and non-participation as an impediment to full participation will be seriously tackled as a priority.

#### THE SUBJECT MATTER OF PLANNING

Keeble (1961) has succinctly described some of the more important problems of planning which are capable of frustrating the meaningful

dialogue between the planners and the planned. He, like Mumford, has suggested that the creation of a satisfactory physical environment would be likely to occur at or near the top of a priority list of measures for social improvement, now that the problems of starvation, illiteracy and political oppression have been largely overcome, at least in the developed nations. The prevailing and growing interest in matters concerned with the 'quality of life' bear testimony to this. However, there may be some reluctance to completely share the view that there is an almost universal interest in the physical environment; many of the articulators of this interest are drawn from the same cultural group as are the principal participants in the democratic decision-making process, and this reduces the impact of the alleged general interest in the physical environment. The reasons for non-participation have been substantially reviewed in the previous section; but, one of the important issues, for urban and regional planning, is a particular dimension of education, not necessarily the intelligence level of the potential participant, but the diversity of subject matter within the scope of planning.

Without doubt, the arrangement and standard of the physical environment whether urban or non-urban, has a considerable effect on the extent to which the general and composite quality of life can be said to be satisfactory. Starting from this point, the subject matter of planning is no less diverse than the full spectrum of the social, economic and physical environment; it is no less complex in its relationships and inter-connectedness than much of the technical gadgetry which becomes available to society in waves; it is deserving of no less a sophisticated decision-making process than the strategic and space programmes of the most advanced nations, although in planning the behavioural variables are less capable of certain prediction, manipulation or control; it is in need of the information storage and analytical capacities of the most intricate computer aids; it is as susceptible to the euphoric introduction of untried techniques and methods, as most forms of political activity, and it is as liable to failure; it is particularly important because of the durability of the decisions which are made, especially when they become fossilised in concrete, and of the timescale necessary to proceed from the idea to its implementation; and, finally, but not necessarily exhausting

the complexity of planning matters, the conduct of planning is almost everywhere constrained by a statutory basis.

In his description of 'the planner as master' Eversley (1973) has made reference to two other facets of urban and regional planning which, because of their prominence, may function as impediments to participation. These are the crude size of the infusions into the physical environment, and the increasing speed of demolition, slum clearance and wholesale redevelopment. The magnitude of the tasks, their explicit complexity and scope, and the implicit complexity derived from the inter-relatedness of the components of the scheme and the decisions required effectively militate against serious fragmentation or alteration to any of the component facets.

Thus, the activities and scope of planning remain a mystery to many sections of the community, and as Eversley has commented, the technical facility available to planning, 'the new planning science' is not infrequently beyond the ken of the planners themselves. In the face of such gargantuan tasks, sophisticated methodologies and techniques, comprehensive environmental concerns, a scope of operations extending from the micro to the macro scales, and the inevitability of a politically reasoned decision, urban and regional planning is likely to persist as Pandora's Box. It was largely in respect of this that the Skeffington Report inferred that there is a point at which participation of the public should be considered undesirable.<sup>(23)</sup>

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<sup>(23)</sup> Skeffington (1969), para. 5(a).

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## CHAPTER 9

### The Impediments Caused by Participation Practices

The impediments caused by participation practices, concerned with the staff prerequisites, the extended cost and time budgets, and the degree of satisfaction with the derived decision, constitute a particular dilemma of citizen participation. It is generally assumed that the implementation of citizen participation strategies is a distinct contribution to the democratic process, a transparent benefit to the principle of democratic decision-making—whether or not much thought, if any, has been given by those who ascribe to this view to the philosophical and especially practical problems and inconsistencies which are generated. The dilemma is not whether to commit the plan-making process to citizen participation, but whether the benefits which may accrue from the commitment significantly counteract the inevitable problems which result. Seaver (1968) has identified the argument which this dilemma produces: whether the best citizen participation may be equated with the least participation. In the final analysis, the critical question is whether or not the conditions necessary to promote and sustain a meaningful level of citizen involvement may be achieved within the prevailing institutionalised administrative, political and professional context, or even whether the possible changes to that system which citizen participation practices will entail will prove of greater benefit to the community as a whole. This is Mann's (1970) most serious reservation; there are recorded instances of citizen participation being advocated to bring about a change to the decision-making system, not necessarily to implement a deeply held conviction of democracy, but often primarily to satisfy an ideo-



logical fanaticism which is impatient with the normal slow process of social change.<sup>(1)</sup>

The impediments to be briefly considered in the following paragraphs are not necessarily exclusive to urban and regional planning; they are generic, they relate to the general problem of participation in decision-making in which the previously described five groups of participants may be conceived more simply as a triumvirate—the citizen(s), the public official(s), the politician(s) (Goldblatt, 1968).

#### STAFF REQUIREMENT

If the programmes of citizen participation are to be developed and sustained in a productive and positive fashion there is a clear need for planners with special skills. Emphasis is placed here on the need for the special skills in the planner because it is this particular role which is located between the consuming citizens and the prescribing politicians; thus, whether the planner is engaged by 'city hall' or by identifiable citizen groups, his activities and attitudes are central to the democratic process. However, as has been previously mentioned (pp 190–94; Fagence, 1975a), there is room for doubt that planners are yet generally equipped to fill this focal role in the participation 'game'. The requirement is likely to be, therefore, for planners who are technically competent, politically astute, psychologically sensitive and sympathetic. There is possibly a need for three types of planning liasor; firstly, there is scope for the public relations exponent, adept at most if not all of the facets of the communication trade—speech, exhortation, response, report writing, graphics, confidential consultation, personal projection, and so on. Such a person would be similar to the White House Press Secretary, but with a greater command of the technical ramifications of the work being publicised. A second type of liasor might be a 'participation-planner', a person both technically and politically competent, capable of enjoying the support of both the planning agency and the citizenry. Perhaps this type of liasor is the most difficult to find, because of the role characteristics—a hide of rhinoceros consistency, limitless patience, endurance and tact, and a faultless command of the profession and ethics of planning. The third type of liasor would be the

<sup>(1)</sup> For example see Young, cited in Seaver (1968), p. 36.

advocacy planner, about which much consideration has already been given (pp 238–245).

A diversity of published accounts of the current scope of competence of the planning profession mention several deficiencies; without doubt, one of the most serious, superceding inadequate command of the systems approach or mathematical model-building techniques, is the lack of a systematic preparation for participation practices. In its consideration of its needs if participation was to be a meaningful part of its plan-making programme, NIPC (1973) defined a catalogue of qualities or characteristics considered to be most acceptable for the participation liasor installed in city hall. If any municipal authority is to seriously address itself to the matters of participation, it should be prepared to significantly increase its establishment of planning staff. The matters of planning are too intricate for the participation liasor to be delegated to the common public relations or information divisions of the municipal establishment. It would be unreasonable for any one person assigned to a participation programme to be expected to be competent across the diversity of necessary skills: some support would be inescapable in the specialist tasks of graphics, report writing and so on to de-jargonise the printed word and the most common form of institutionalised plan or diagram. In addition to the skills of communication and diplomacy (Fagence, 1975b), the NIPC study nominated characteristics of (a) maturity, (b) local acceptability, (c) free agent, (d) professional credibility, and (e) personal charisma.

It is possible that some of the local planning authorities indulging in participation programmes are competently staffed for this purpose; however, this must be coincidental, because evidence has shown that many planning schools are conspicuously not training the student planners in such areas of skill, and, as Eversley (1973) has commented, most planners in senior positions were trained and gained their experience at a time well before the euphoria for citizen participation achieved significant moment. To complicate the dilemma, many planning agencies are not aware of the most suitable professionals to engage for the participation roles.<sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>(2)</sup> But, it needs to be conceded, that at the present state of knowledge, it would be reasonable to ask 'who is'?

Before any local planning authority, at whatever level of operation, embarks upon a programme of citizen participation, there is a clear responsibility for it to *conscientiously* (a) assess the demands upon the existing staff such a programme might make, (b) review the competence of that staff to conduct the programme and to discharge the myriad responsibilities, (c) agree to remedy any deficiencies. To properly staff the planning team to implement the participation exercise is an obligation the local authority automatically assumes through the spirit of prevailing planning legislation; it is a moral obligation of municipalities to be competently staffed to discharge its statutory duties. Planning is too delicate a community service for 'bumbledom' to prevail.

Thus, the first serious impediment generated by the introduction of citizen participation is the inability of most planning agencies to meet the competence requirement without significantly augmenting its planning staff, despite the likelihood that for some while yet, there will be a dearth of specialist participation-planners.<sup>(3)</sup>

#### IMPEDIMENT OF COST

Programmes of citizen participation necessitate considerable commitment to augmented budgets of staff, time and money.

The Skeffington Committee (1969) was cognisant of the cost element in participation, but it proved to be reticent to set out likely cost guidelines.<sup>(4)</sup> It reasoned, for example, that the variation between planning agencies in respect of their population, area, and financial resources would defy any posited quantitative yardstick, and that the entire matter was rendered more complicated by the diversity in nature and scope of planning situations. Two cases were considered in the appendix to the Report, and brief mention will be made of them in the following paragraphs; however, the Skeffington Committee recorded its conviction that "money spent on providing

<sup>(3)</sup> Cheshire County Council has an appointment designated 'Participation Officer'; Tacoma (US) planning department recommended the appointment of a 'citizen involvement co-ordinator'; the Australian Department of Urban and Regional Development has appointed a script-writer with 'planning awareness'.

<sup>(4)</sup> Skeffington (1969), paras. 215-220.

for participation (is a) worthwhile expenditure.”<sup>(5)</sup> In addition to the costs accruing to the planning authority because of its own activities, the Skeffington Committee noted the possibility of the authority underwriting certain costs incurred by the lay participant groups. This additional cost burden might often be the culminating argument against the indulgence in meaningful participation by the local authority. The increased costs likely to be incurred by some or all of the participant groups would possibly be attributable to (a) the need to hire specialist staff or advocates, or the simple requirement of more staff to cope with the demands of the increased dialogue; (b) the lengthened time-scale, with the attendant possibility of manipulated delays, both of which have a cost expression; (c) the need to indulge in the preparation and production of special publications, either inviting a dialogue, or explaining a particular point of view; (d) the occasional situation demanding a ‘rush job’ which might result in overtures for or expectations of additional payment at augmented scales; (e) the indulgence in experimentation, either simply with conventional publicity means, or more innovatively with purpose-designed media presentations and publications; (f) the demands for additional space (or space at all) for the workforce in the programme, for the storage of materials, for the display of viewpoint-relevant materials.

The expenditure on participation programmes is likely to be influenced by a number of interacting factors. For example, one of the initial factors of control will be the extent of commitment to the philosophy of participation and a *carte blanche* acceptance of the inevitability of contributing considerable sums of money if the cause is to be implemented in a meaningful fashion. Experience will influence the expenditure, in that in the accounting process of ‘value for money’ if the quantitative expression of participation has been low and there has been a tendency for any that did transpire to be principally obstructive, it would be understandable for a local planning authority to be reluctant to commit much of the local rate and taxpayers money to provide a platform for groups considered to be less than generally representative. In the generation of the account for a citizen participation programme, however, there is a

<sup>(5)</sup> Skeffington (1969), para. 216.

likelihood of either omitting the costs incurred by the programme in respect of those items of materials and labour considered to be more generally utilised in planning activities, or of double-counting them. For example, in the three studies reported by Skeffington, there may be a suspicion that the total of forty-four man hours attributed to the Potters Green exercise in Coventry seriously underestimates the time taken to prepare for the programme, and therefore considerably understates the likely cost-equivalent; in any case, the city council omitted separate reference to the costs of materials. The two reported cost case studies of Hampshire County Council and Liverpool, reveal the range of cost-contributory factors in terms of man-hours, rental of premises for display purposes, materials for display, media advertisements, travelling costs and remuneration, consultations with the public, interest groups and districts, preparation and production of publicity materials, the production of multiple sets of display and publicity materials to facilitate simultaneous exposure in different locations.

A number of planning agencies have attempted to reduce the total costs of a participation programme to a *per capita* sum; but, this procedure is not a useful exercise, not only because of the invariable psychological harm this calculation can have on the institutional participants—high sums *per capita* of the participants is the norm—but also because it seriously understates the disguised ‘involvement’ of many people reached by the publicity and propaganda, some becoming educated in planning matters, others having their fears of the future allayed, and still others being encouraged to interest themselves in community activities generally.

It is not without possibility that the prosecution of any lengthy daytime or evening participation programmes might entail the consideration of reimbursement to the participants. In most juror selection systems, the employers are generally obliged to release their employees and not to occasion them financial hardship; however, in some participation events, it might become necessary to reimburse the participants for travel and exceptional expenses, to cover the likelihood of lost earnings, or to underwrite the wages or salaries at their source. The prospect might be to cover the costs incurred by lost wages, travel, child-care and so on (NIPC, 1973).

The entire issue of costs is complex, but it is likely that an awareness of the extent of this matter will evolve through time as the participants, through experience, become capable of quantifying in monetary terms the range of expenses incurred by the various activities which might collectively constitute a meaningful participation expression. At the present time, there is a conspicuous lack of substantive data on the costs of participation: the reasons for this are most likely to be associated with the difficulty of separately identifying and allocating general planning costs between a number of schemes, and of taking into account the costs incurred by departments other than planning in the local authority, but the lack of serious cost appraisals might also be a product of political expediency. Most of the relevance of this brief discussion on costs has been to local planning authorities; although the preparation of a cost budget should be more simple for each lay participant or interest group, much of the time, energy and material costs (and some advocacy costs if suitable professional expertise is available within the ranks of any group) may be deliberately omitted. There is reasonable cause for a suspicion that if there was a greater awareness of the money costs of undertaking a substantial participation programme this area of impediment would be even more significant, and there might be a more serious assessment of the benefits allegedly accruing from the pluralist decision-making form.

#### IMPEDIMENT OF TIME

The NIPC (1973) study identified 'time' as perhaps the most stringent impediment. Most planning activities are undertaken within a time brief which is insufficient to allow the achievement of a unilateral degree of satisfaction in each of the survey, analytical, consultative, creative and evaluative phases of the planning process. In order to render the achievement both more ordered and likely, resort is being made increasingly to project evaluation charts and a diversity of critical path and management networks (DOE, 1971). Despite the attempts to rationalise the decision-making process, and to apportion the time available between the expected actions, the introduction of citizen participation to the process has necessitated a prolongation

of most of the phases, or it has seriously interrupted the preconceived smooth flow of activities, causing the process to lurch from phase to phase. There is a need to devise an open time-frame for the planning process if meaningful participation is to be encouraged.

As with the examination of the cost impediment, there is a distinct lack of definitive evidence of the effect of the indulgence in participation programmes, although most commentaries assume the addition of citizen participation will prolong the timescale of the decision-process. In simple assessment, this need not be so, if the time taken to complete each of the previously conventional tasks was limited to that which was *necessary* rather than that which was expedient.<sup>(6)</sup> Heap (1973) has insisted that the greater the degree of participation conceded to the public, the longer the planning process will take: "Indeed, unless John Citizen is fully instructed before he seeks to participate, the delays which his intervention could cause might even become intolerable."<sup>(7)</sup> The planning process is frequently criticised for its length; those used to working within its conventional and expected time constraints and delays can adjust to the frustrations, but the less experienced participants readily fall prone to the exasperations which devolve from a lack of understanding of the intricacies of planning and of the inevitable 'promise-delivery gap' (Tacoma, 1971). The involvement of citizens in something which is not 'action', but which is preparation for action, is a difficulty for those participants and, by repercussion, all the others. This substantially corroborates Heap's preference for participant education. There is general agreement that the planning process needs to be accelerated rather than further retarded by the introduction of a complicating and prolonging series of consultations, and a variety of statutory and non-statutory means have been introduced to achieve more speed. The prolongation of the decision-process may be a disbenefit to all participants and the non-participating mass public—the uncertainty of a decision outcome may increase planning blight, may disadvantage

<sup>(6)</sup> The more extensive use of corporate management and project co-ordination techniques in English local government has revealed the time-elapse *necessary* to undertake nominated tasks, and this time evaluation has exposed in many cases a time-latitude to accommodate further dialogue, further refinement of the data or recommendation, additional steps or a shortened process.

<sup>(7)</sup> Heap (1973), p. 212.

sections of the community needing certain development or others hoping proposed development will not occur, but there have been occasions on which the involvement of a multitude of 'cooks' may have beneficially delayed the implementation of a planning scheme.<sup>(8)</sup> This prospect has led Heap to hope that the citizen's involvement, particularly in the formative stages of new development plans, will not be approached in a negative way, but that it will contribute to the more positive and constructive direction and passage of planning proposals.

The time impediment has several dimensions; firstly, and at the most simple level, the actual involvement of a mass public is likely inevitably to prolong the planning process; secondly, because of the dialogue nature of participation, with an exchange of responses, feedback and revision, the progression of the process becomes inescapably hesitant, stuttering and fragmented; the cohesion of the process is upset, thirdly, by the need to accommodate periods during which the lay participants may receive and digest information preparatory to issuing a response in one form or another; fourthly, during the phase of public digestion of information, the planning process can only proceed along the less sensitive 'fronts', thereby introducing the possibility of a mismatch of planning phases; with the arena for objection, representation, criticism and comment opened to the public, the planning process becomes hindered, fifthly, by the obligation on the planning agency, to respond to each submitted lay observation; sixthly, less concerned with urgency in the context of an ongoing decision process, lay participants are liable to unconsciously impede progress by the lax way in which they respond to invitations to participate, and the imposition of a time quota does little more than ensure that the volume of late responses will be high. At the root of most of the time problems is the likelihood that it is the low competence level of the lay participants which frustrates the acceleration of the decision-process; in addition to the exposure of the particular planning issues capable of sustaining public involvement, there is clearly a need for those issues to be explained and

<sup>(8)</sup> There is, for example, a school of thought which believes the delay to the redevelopment of Piccadilly Circus has provided London with an inestimable escape.



related to a more general planning context if there is to be a serious likelihood that the public response will be rational and educated.

In his evaluation of experience gained in a number of participation exercises, Scarlett (1971) conceded that the plans to emerge from the participation exercises were subjected to little change as a result of the expenditure of considerable effort and time on the strategies of citizen involvement; as a result, it may be posited that it is the planner who gains from the experience by the extension of his horizons, rather than the lay participant who might have been expected to have developed a heightened awareness of community matters in general, and planning issues in particular. This recorded position is not uncommon; it may conveniently be supported by the common practice of local planning authorities to specify the phasing of deliberations on the development of a plan, thereby pressuring the lay public and the voluntary labour in the interest groups to come to a decision in each phase through scarcely adequate consideration, committing a less than well-considered response to achieve at least a submission. This resort to expediency, though patently abhorrent both to the spirit of democracy and the intentions of the Skeffington recommendations, is the travesty that it is because of the time constraint on decision-making.

The spectre of prolonging the process, of inviting delay by extending the participant inventory and of achieving little measurable improvement commensurate with the expenditures of time, money and psychological and physical effort, is a fearsome deterrent to the introduction of anything more than token participation. Neither the plan-making agencies nor the lay citizen participants can really afford the time required to implement a meaningful programme of participation; the competition for participants' time renders expediency and tokenism the more feasible courses of action.

#### EFFICIENCY IN DECISION-MAKING

Most of the national reports from various European countries to the IULA research project 'citizen participation and Local Government' (IULA, 1971) commented that the notions of efficiency and participation are not necessarily antithetical; on the contrary, there

is a strong body of opinion that in a democracy no decision which has largely ignored a general citizen's input may be considered to be 'democratic'. Some reports to the project made reference to the potential frustrations and delays wrought in the context of multiple centres of authority, and for which decision-making efficiency was essential to ensure both coherence and co-ordination; the diversity of reports opined that citizen participation would be an instrument for achieving coherence and co-ordination. There is a general attitude towards participation, particularly from the 'experts', that any decision-making process involving both laymen and experts would inevitably be both protracted and strained.

The strain most obviously occurs through the tradition of compromise or consensus formation. It has been observed that one of the crucial keys to long term planning commitments is the development of majority support by the mass public, and the vehicle for that support would normally be the willingness to compromise for the benefit of majority interests. The debate that the compromise is the culmination of political wisdom in a democracy is not clearly won on either side. Consensus formation and compromise might not result in the most suitable decision if it is brought about by frustration and the desire to avoid protracted deliberations. Three national reports<sup>(9)</sup> identified a particular cause of frustration; any decision-making process which accommodates the participation of groups or individuals seeking an opportunity to perform tasks beyond their capabilities, or which provides opportunities for low-key dialogue, is certain to cause frustration both to those who discover their incapacity and to the other participants required to lower their consultation horizon. The strain is one manifestation of participatory decision-making. Concessions which are achieved as a result of compromise decisions, usually at the insistence of minority rather than majority groups, are unlikely to contribute to an equitable decision. In respect of this imbalance, the Irish report to the IULA project insisted that participation was conducive more to subsequent modification or even defeat of 'official' policies and proposals—i.e. a nega-

<sup>(9)</sup> Those of Britain, Netherlands and Poland. Mimeographed copies of the fifteen reports (fourteen from Europe, and the U.S.A.) are obtainable from the IULA Secretariat.

tive involvement—rather than contributory to the initiation of them. In addition, the Spanish report commented that the citizen response to the opportunities for participation were essentially lethargic and complacent: “the response of citizens lags behind the efforts of the local authorities to involve them in local policy matters.”<sup>(10)</sup> Martini (1972) has pursued the theme of the primacy of participation in decision contexts of multiple centres of authority, and the inevitability of the consensus decision form.

However, the decision-making process in urban and regional planning has become so intricate that the involvement of laymen has become either unfeasible, or undesirable. The engineering and management sciences continue to make available sophisticated decision aids—both techniques and machines; but, such aids are not generally suitable if the participant groups are not collectively conversant with the decision-forming capacity available to them. Certainly, no technique or machine has been reported capable of accommodating the generally unstructured machinations of the lay public, producing from them coherent and usable statements of intent or opinion; thus, even in the present developmental stage of sophisticated decision aids, most, if not all, consultation procedures involving the lay public remain crude and suspiciously inefficient. The crudity may be gauged from the manner in which compromise and consensus decisions are reached; for example, (a) following the capitulation of one or more participants to the frustrations of delay and vacillation, accepting the expediency of the compromise or concession; (b) following the battle of wits between protagonists and the emergence of a tactical victor (and his viewpoint) or through a carefully balanced retraction of points from each argument; (c) following the recasting of a sequence of decisions once a crucial decision has been manipulated and changed through power-play; (d) in order to prevent disclosure of particular confidential or sensitive issues likely to prejudice either the matter under discussion or some other. In these, and similar situations, the likelihood is high of politically expedient decision-making rather than positive and substantiated rational decision-making.

<sup>(10)</sup> Cited in IULA (1971), p. 53.

In adding considerably to the number of cooks at the decision-making pot, practices of participatory decision-making are scarcely *cordon bleu* recipes for championship fare; but then presumably, the entire democratic process is incapable of achieving such standards. There are grounds for considering that the advent of citizen participation in decision-making has not improved the efficiency of the planning process, and perhaps it has increased its previous high degree of inefficiency (Tacoma, 1971).

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## CHAPTER 10

### A Conclusion

The title of this chapter has been chosen deliberately; the subject of citizen participation in decision-making is so susceptible to personal interpretation, despite the wealth of argument and counter-argument which may be presented, that any attempt to conclude a discussion such as has been presented in the preceding chapters dare not stipulate that only one conclusion may be drawn. 'Citizen participation' will continue to be discussed and argued so long as (a) the public has attitudes and views it finds it necessary to communicate to government; (b) the diversity of participants find it expedient to consult; and (c) the system of government remains 'open' and democratic. Thus, the issue is less of techniques or means, important as these are; rather is it a composite one of representational form and the representativeness of the representatives. This, in summary, was the principle concern in the exchanges at the IULA Zagreb conference in 1971; the conference sought to reconcile the disparate and sometimes competing societal need for governmental leadership with true representation of the wishes and desires of the governed. One conference discussion group noted that democratic local government is inconceivable without real citizen participation, despite the frustrations of time delay, the potential inequities and inefficiencies of decision-making, the additional costs, and the need of particularly competent public officials. Yet too much participation may be as dysfunctional as too little (Banovetz, 1972).

From the considerations of Part 1 it emerged that the prevailing conceptions and manifestations of neither direct nor representative democracy were entirely accommodating to expressions of citizen participation. Direct democracy has been criticised because it creates a leadership vacuum, is potentially unstable fluctuating between

citizen disinterest and apathy to hyperactivity and revolution, fails to provide for the unrepresented mass, and because it cannot be functionally adapted to the needs and realities of the twentieth century. Representative democracy has been criticised on the issues of representative legitimation, the restricted scope of the views represented, the potential for power retention in a closed population spectrum, and the failure to adapt to changing interests and articulators.

There remain the suspicions that there is really little evidence that the mass of the public really wants to participate. The cause of this phenomenon is not easily determined; it might be associated with the complexity of planning issues, the increasing complexity of the sophisticated decision or analytical aids, the frustrations of the time lapse between idea and implementation, the resort to expediency and compromise, the general lack of mastery over the technical skills of public speaking, community organisation and institutionalised procedures, the scale of some planning matters, the competition for financial resources many planning matters prescribe, the degree of change wrought through participation, the diversity of value systems in the community, or any other matter. Despite the serious impediments to citizen participation which are almost universal in their expression, and which have been aired in Chapters 8 and 9, the Zagreb conference confirmed the desirability of considering the ramifications of citizen participation as no less significant than the reformulation of governmental systems. Such an attitude is a commitment to the widespread use of participation strategies no matter what the risks and costs endemic to such participation.

Two further concluding remarks are pertinent; these are derived from two different perspectives.

The commitment towards citizen participation in planning by planners should be derived from the social ethic of planning, one of the foundations of the planning profession. The social ethic or ideology in planning comes from the strong tradition of social commitment and idealism inherent in planning. This ethic, reported and commented upon in most comprehensive discussions of planning, has been cited as one of the important influences on planners' behaviour (Kitchen, 1974), as a prerequisite for a philosophy of planning (Howard, 1955), and as the *raison d'être* for planning intervention

(Singer, 1971). In an attempt to define the ideology of planning, Foley (1960) considers social advocacy to be one of the principal 'sub-ideologies'.

Politicians, motivated by a similar commitment to the common good, approach its attainment somewhat differently. In his commentary on a United Nations seminar considering 'Participation in Local Government as a Means of Promoting Human Rights' Ascher (1967) reported the comment of a Yugoslavian delegate that the plan for a commune could not merely be the sum of the plans of separate self-management groups; the important role of the elected representatives of local councils was to *co-ordinate* and *adjust* the many sectoral plans to a communal plan. Thus, co-ordination was the role perceived as appropriate to the elected representatives. For the public to accept this final adjudication by politicians it is necessary for all parties to decision-making to be aware that "the political element to participation and communication is always there... people will only accept as effective what they also regard as fair and just".<sup>(1)</sup> Realisation of this could be sufficient to persuade all parties that, provided interests are seen to be safeguarded by representatives elected on an omnibus political package, the necessary energies and resources would be better committed to the deliberate development of a more intelligent and responsive public opinion, especially amongst those sections of the public really affected on particular issues.

'Citizen participation' as a movement has probably endured sufficiently for it to be taken seriously; it need no longer be considered the current planning phobia. However, there is little justification for upsetting the tradition-fashioned and institutionalised decision-making processes in the wake of temporary revolutionary zeal; human history has generally progressed in a more evolutionary manner. Thus, "the change necessary to increase the quality and quantity of citizen participation must be secured by incremental means—by building and improving upon the structures and systems already in existence."<sup>(2)</sup> In order for this more substantial but pedestrian process to take place, prior reference should be made to such matters as

<sup>(1)</sup> Anon (1968), p. 365.

<sup>(2)</sup> Banovetz (1972), p. 60.

the political philosophy of democracy, the decision-making frameworks and the characteristics of the participants; only after such an examination should consideration be given to the means or techniques by which meaningful participation may be achieved. These have been the considerations of this study; these comprise one of many alternative courses of action preparatory to the operational commitment to citizen participation in urban and regional planning.

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